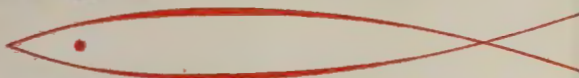


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# THE CONCISE GOSPEL AND THE ACTS



A continuous narrative harmonizing the four Gospels and the Acts

COMPILED BY

Christopher J.  
CHRISTIANSON

INTRODUCTION BY

**LARRY CHRISTENSON**

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Where do you begin to read the Bible, when you've never read it before? What can you give a parent, a child, or a friend to help them begin to share your own excitement with the message of this ancient and imposing book? The Bible is a thick volume, frequently printed in stilted, double column arrangements, broken into verses with supernumerals and miniscule letters scattered distractingly through the text, surrounded by annotations, variant readings and cross references, and often in archaic English. No wonder even veteran Bible readers are heard to complain of the need of the Good News presented in a modern, concise, and unadorned format.

Across the nation a new and great hunger has arisen for the message of this book, but a hunger expressed by

*(Continued on back flap)*

(Continued from front flap)

now-generation people, enormously pressed for their time and attention.

Here, to provide immediate exposure to the very heart of the Bible, is the story of Jesus' life, with the four Gospels woven together into one continuous narrative, including the story of what happened to His apostles after His Resurrection and how they carried the Gospel to the ends of the earth. Eliminating time-consuming repetition and making use of the most up-to-date grammatical idioms, *The Concise Gospel and the Acts* will be welcomed by Bible readers of every age and level of understanding.

**Christopher J. Christianson** has pastored the Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Ephrata, Washington, since 1960. After serving as a combat radioman with the Marine Corps in the Pacific through five assault landings, he took a bachelor's degree from St. Olaf College in Minnesota and later graduated from Luther Seminary in St. Paul. He and his wife, Anne, have four children.

From the Introduction by Larry Christenson  
author of *The Christian Family*

**This book, I believe, will serve a real purpose in giving people an “impact encounter” with the life of Jesus. It could be especially useful in introducing Jesus to people who may never have really learned about His life, His teachings, and His death and resurrection. It reads like an exciting biography.**

**The author’s selection of Scriptures and his transitions are skillfully done. His translation of the text is simply and effectively written; it suits the style of his work and is faithful to the text.**

**The ‘greatest story ever told’ never grows old in the re-telling. This telling of it will bring the Man of Nazareth and the reader to a face-to-face, a heart-to-heart encounter.**

**LARRY CHRISTENSON**  
Pastor, Trinity Lutheran Church  
San Pedro, California

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CHRISTOPHER J. CHRISTIANSON

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# *Introduction*

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# *Publisher's Preface*

THE GOSPELS of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the "synoptic" (from the Greek *to look or appear the same*) Gospels because of the striking similarities of their content. In 1924 B. H. Streeter, the great British scholar, issued the results of his painstaking research in *The Four Gospels, A Study of Origins*. Mark, he discovered, could be found *verbatim* with the exception of a handful of verses within the pages of Matthew and Luke. Beyond that Matthew and Luke contained a good deal of material in common that was not found in Mark, for example Jesus' lament over Jerusalem (Matthew 23 and Luke 13). Then there were stories unique to Matthew (e.g. The Flight into Egypt and Return, ch. 2) and others unique to Luke, like the Parable of the Prodigal Son in chapter 15.

The Gospel of John has, in the estimate of most readers, always stood over against the other three evangel narratives with the bulk of its material utterly peculiar to itself. John did however include stories that occurred in the synoptic Gospels. Among them were the feeding of the multitude and Jesus before the Sanhedrin (chapters 6 and 18).

Even in ancient times these facts did not escape the notice of Bible readers. According to Eusebius, Tatian the Assyrian composed his *Diatessaron*, weaving together the four Gospel narratives by omitting the parallel passages, about A.D. 170. It provided a basis for many commentaries and sermons in the early and medieval church and served as a model for other works like it in Dutch, Italian, and even Persian. The impact of the *Diatessaron* on the ancient Christian community was apparently immense which only makes it more puzzling that not a single manuscript of Tatian's work has come down to us in the twentieth century.

But in the twentieth century there is perhaps a greater need for just such an abbreviated edition of the Gospels than at any time since the Dark Ages. Modern readers are swamped by the massive volumes of printed material that comes into their hands every day. They cry out for a succinct and simple presentation of material they want or need to digest. In an era when the Christ of the Gospels is having an enormous impact on the lives of men and women around the globe, there has probably not been a more enormous ignorance of the basic content of these documents since they were written. *The Concise Gospel and the Acts* have been compiled to meet just that need, presenting the apostolic narrative clearly and simply without distracting numerical systems or verse divisions, designed to be read with the ease of a modern non-fiction narrative.

Plainfield, New Jersey  
Ash Wednesday, 1973

# *Foreword*

FOR many years I read the Scriptures only in bits and pieces—sometimes a few verses, but seldom more than a chapter or two at one sitting. It was like taking the pieces of a new jig-saw puzzle out of its box and haphazardly examining each piece in an effort to see the big picture. It was a frustrating task.

So it was that, more than two decades ago, I decided to stop “playing with the pieces” and make a definite effort to see the big picture of the Bible. If I could read the Bible from cover to cover, I thought, perhaps I could understand more clearly what the Christian life was all about. It took me a full week to read through the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. Even at that I discovered that it was difficult to follow the story-line of the Old Testament. There is much extraneous material, much redundancy and repetition. I sympathized completely when a new Christian said to me, “I tried reading the Bible, pastor, but I couldn’t follow the plot.” That had been my experience too.

Many Christians hunger to know what God has to say in His Word but they too quickly get lost in the vastness of 900,000 words. Concerned about this problem, sev-

eral years ago I conceived the idea of a succinct or concise Bible, in which material not important to the immediate story-line was removed.

I turned to the Gospel narratives because they appear to the new reader to be almost entirely repetitive. Although there is some truth to this complaint, a close reading quickly reveals that each of the Gospels contains some information not found in the others. However, when a person is eager to learn about Jesus Christ and His teaching, the repetitions can be particularly annoying.

Each of the four Gospels has much that is unique to contribute to the composite picture of Jesus and His ministry. Each adds its own special color and shadings. Blended together they give a most complete and satisfying picture.

It is generally conceded that Mark's Gospel is the oldest of the four. Mark was not one of the twelve disciples. He learned about Jesus and His ministry by listening to Peter. Luke, the Gentile physician, was not one of the twelve either. He was a close companion of the apostle Paul through whom he had access to many of the great personalities in the early church. Luke indicates (Luke 1:2, 3) that he researched his material from among eye-witnesses. It was a simpler matter for Matthew and John to write their Gospel accounts having been eye witnesses to most of the events they record.

Luke and Matthew apparently had access to Mark's Gospel before writing their own accounts. They used Mark's account as an outline or guideline, often copying word for word some of the passages; but then adding information to their accounts that was not included in Mark's Gospel. All three of these Gospels were probably written between the fourth and seventh dec-

ades of the first century. John didn't write his account until much later, perhaps at the very turn of the century.

Because Matthew, Mark, and Luke cover essentially the same material, they are called the synoptic (look alike) Gospels. John had access to all three of these accounts and he recorded much of the material they overlooked in their accounts.

Each of the Gospel accounts has its own merits and strengths. Mark reports the life and ministry of Jesus in the factual manner of a news reporter, revealing not only the divine but also the human side of Jesus. Matthew had a special concern for the Jewish community. He made a concerted effort to prove that Jesus truly was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Luke aimed at the Gentiles. He gave Hebraic terms their Greek equivalents so that non-Jews could better understand them. John had had a whole lifetime to reflect upon and evaluate the lessons taught by Jesus and by the time he wrote his account, the Christian church was well established as a primarily Gentile body. John interprets the teachings of Jesus to that established church, giving the deeper spiritual lessons of Christianity.

Each Gospel has strength in its own right, but how much greater strength when the four strong cords of the Gospels are braided into one fine rope.

Much in the same vein that Luke attempted to make Jewish terms more readily understood by the Gentiles, I have taken the liberty to translate the Hebrew idioms into meaningful terms to people of our generation.

It is my sincere hope and prayer that *The Concise Gospel and Acts* will encourage the reading of longer segments of the Good News at each sitting, giving the reader a more accurate view of the big, composite picture of the Gospels. I further hope that the reader can

understand readily what he reads without having to refer to a Bible commentary.

God bless your reading of His Word.

*Christopher J. Christianson*

*Ephrata, Washington*

*Epiphany, 1973*

# THE CONCISE GOSPEL

# *Chronology of the Concise Gospel*

(for an outline of the Acts see pp. 144–145)

## **PART I—The Early Life of Jesus Christ**

- a. Introduction  
Mt. 1:1; Mk. 1:1; Lk. 1:1–4; Jn. 1:1–18
- b. The angel visits Zechariah promising the birth of John the Baptist  
Lk. 1:5–25
- c. The angel visits the virgin Mary promising the birth of Jesus  
Lk. 1:26–38
- d. Mary visits Elizabeth and speaks “the Magnificat”  
Lk. 1:39–56
- e. The birth and naming of John the Baptist, and “the Benedictus”  
Lk. 1:57–80
- f. The birth of Jesus in Bethlehem  
Mt. 1:18–25; Lk. 2:1–7
- g. The angels proclaim the birth of Jesus, and shepherds visit him  
Lk. 2:8–20
- h. The circumcision and naming of Jesus  
Lk. 2:21
- i. The presentation of Jesus in the temple, and “the Nunc Dimittis”  
Lk. 2:22–40

- j. The wise men come with gifts, and Herod's plan to destroy Jesus  
Mt. 2:1-12
- k. Joseph and Mary take Jesus to Egypt  
Mt. 2:13-23
- l. Jesus at twelve years of age visits Jerusalem  
Lk. 2:41-50
- m. Jesus grows up in Nazareth  
Lk. 2:51-52
- n. John the Baptist comes preaching and baptizing  
Mt. 3:1-12; Mk. 1:2-8; Lk. 3:1-18
- o. Jesus comes to John to be baptized  
Mt. 3:13-17; Mk. 1:9-11; Lk. 3:21-22
- p. Jesus goes into the wilderness to be tempted  
Mt. 4:1-11; Mk. 1:12-13; Lk. 4:1-13

## PART II—Jesus Begins His Public Ministry

- a. John the Baptist announces that Jesus is the Lamb of God  
Jn. 1:19-34
- b. Jesus begins to gather disciples  
Jn. 1:35-51
- c. Jesus performs his first miracle at Cana  
Jn. 2:1-12
- d. The Pharisee Nicodemus visits Jesus at night  
Jn. 3:1-21
- e. Jesus and John the Baptist in Judea  
Jn. 3:22-36
- f. Jesus teaches at the well of Sychar in Samaria  
Jn. 4:1-42
- g. Jesus returns to minister in province of Galilee  
Jn. 4:43-45
- h. The son of a government official is healed at Capernaum  
Jn. 4:46-54
- i. Jesus begins preaching and teaching in synagogues of Galilee  
Mt. 4:12-17; Mk. 1:14-15; Lk. 4:14-15
- j. Jesus is put out of the synagogue at Nazareth  
Lk. 4:16-30
- k. The big catch of fish. Peter, Andrew, James, and John become disciples  
Mt. 4:18-22; Mk. 1:16-20; Lk. 5:1-11
- l. Jesus ministers in Capernaum and other places in Galilee

- Mt. 4:23-25; 8:1-4, 14-17; Mk. 1:21-45; Lk. 4:31-44; 5:12-16
- m. Jesus heals a paralyzed man  
Mt. 9:1-8; Mk. 2:1-12; Lk. 5:17-26
  - n. Matthew, the tax collector, becomes a disciple  
Mt. 9:9-13; Mk. 2:13-17; Lk. 5:27-32
  - o. New cloth and old garments; new wine and old wineskins  
Mt. 9:14-17; Mk. 2:18-22; Lk. 5:33-39
  - p. Jesus heals the invalid by the pool of Bethesda on the sabbath  
Jn. 5:1-18
  - q. Jesus teaches about eternal life  
Jn. 5:19-47
  - r. The Pharisees criticize the disciples for picking grain on the sabbath  
Mt. 12:1-8; Mk. 2:23-28; Lk. 6:1-5
  - s. Jesus heals a man on the sabbath  
Mt. 12:9-14; Mk. 3:1-6; Lk. 6:6-11
  - t. Jesus heals and teaches beside the Sea of Galilee  
Mt. 12:15-21; Mk. 3:7-12

### PART III—Jesus Selects and Instructs the Twelve Apostles

- a. The twelve are chosen  
Mt. 3:13-19a; Lk. 6:12-19
- b. Jesus preaches the “Sermon on the Mount”  
Mt. 5:1-7:29; Mk. 9:50; Lk. 6:20-49; 14:34-35
- c. Jesus heals the slave of the Roman commander at Capernaum  
Mt. 8:5-13; Lk. 7:1-10
- d. Jesus raises the son of the widow at Nain  
Lk. 7:11-17
- e. Imprisoned John the Baptist sends messengers to Jesus  
Mt. 11:2-19; Lk. 3:19-20; 7:18-35
- f. Jesus is anointed by penitent woman. Parable of creditor who forgave two debtors  
Lk. 7:36-50
- g. Jesus and the twelve apostles go on preaching mission  
Lk. 8:1-3
- h. Friends, family, and enemies attempt to restrain Jesus  
Mt. 12:22-50; Mk. 3:19b-35; Lk. 8:19-21
- i. Jesus gives the parables of the kingdom  
Mt. 13:1-52; Mk. 4:1-34; Lk. 8:4-18; 13:18-21

- j. Jesus calms the storm  
Mt. 8:18, 23–27; Mk. 4:35–41; Lk. 8:22–25
- k. Jesus heals the demoniac at Gerasa  
Mt. 8:28–34; Mk. 5:1–20; Lk. 8:26–39
- l. Jesus heals the hemorrhaging woman and Jairus' daughter  
Mt. 9:18–26; Mk. 5:21–43; Lk. 8:40–56
- m. Jesus heals two blind men and a speechless demoniac  
Mt. 9:27–34
- n. Jesus in Nazareth  
Mt. 13:53–58; Mk. 6:1–6

## PART IV—Jesus Sends the Apostles Out and Continues His Ministry

- a. The apostles are instructed and sent out  
Mt. 9:35–11:1; Mk. 6:7–13; Lk. 9:1–6
- b. John the Baptist is beheaded  
Mt. 14:1–12; Mk. 6:14–29; Lk. 9:7–9
- c. The five thousand are fed, and the twelve return  
Mt. 14:13–21; Mk. 6:30–44; Lk. 9:10–17; Jn. 6:1–14
- d. Jesus walks on the sea  
Mt. 14:22–36; Mk. 6:45–56; Jn. 6:15–24
- e. Jesus teaches about himself as the Bread of Life  
Jn. 6:25–71
- f. Jesus condemns the traditions of the Pharisees and scribes  
Mt. 15:1–20; Mk. 7:1–23
- g. Jesus travels to Tyre and Sidon  
Mt. 15:21–28; Mk. 7:24–30
- h. Jesus returns by way of the Ten Greek Cities  
Mt. 15:29–31; Mk. 7:31–37
- i. Jesus feeds the four thousand  
Mt. 15:32–39; Mk. 8:1–10
- j. Jesus warns disciples against the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees  
Mt. 16:1–12; Mk. 8:11–21
- k. Jesus heals a blind man at Bethsaida  
Mk. 8:22–26
- l. Peter confesses his belief that Jesus is the Messiah  
Mt. 16:13–20; Mk. 8:27–30; Lk. 9:18–20
- m. Jesus foretells of his coming death and resurrection  
Mt. 16:21–23; Mk. 8:31–33; Lk. 9:21–22

- n. Jesus teaches about disciple's need to take up one's cross and deny oneself  
Mt. 16:24–28; Mk. 8:34–9:1; Lk. 9:23–27
- o. Jesus is transfigured  
Mt. 17:1–13; Mk. 9:2–13; Lk. 9:28–36
- p. Jesus heals the epileptic boy  
Mt. 17:14–21; Mk. 9:14–29; Lk. 9:37–43a
- q. Jesus foretells his death and resurrection a second time  
Mt. 17:22–23; Mk. 9:30–32; Lk. 9:43b–45
- r. Jesus sends Peter to catch fish with coin in its mouth  
Mt. 17:24–27
- s. Jesus teaches humility and self-denial  
Mt. 18:1–14; Mk. 9:33–49; Lk. 9:46–50; 22:24–30
- t. Jesus teaches duty of forgiveness and tells parable of the unforgiving servant  
Mt. 18:15–35; Lk. 17:1–4
- u. Jesus attends the feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem  
Jn. 7:1–52
- v. Jesus confronts the woman taken in adultery  
Jn. 7:53–8:11
- w. Jesus debates with the Jewish authorities in the temple  
Jn. 8:12–59
- x. Jesus heals the man born blind  
Jn. 9:1–41
- y. Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd  
Jn. 10:1–21
- z. Jesus attends the feast of Dedication in Jerusalem  
Jn. 10:22–42

## **PART V—Jesus Completes His Ministry**

- a. Jesus visits Samaria  
Mt. 19:1–2; Mk. 10:1; Lk. 9:51–56
- b. Jesus tells who is fit for the kingdom of God  
Mt. 8:19–22; Lk. 9:57–62
- c. Jesus instructs and sends out the Seventy  
Mt. 11:20–30; Lk. 10:1–24
- d. Jesus tells the parable of the good Samaritan  
Lk. 10:25–37
- e. Jesus visits the home in Bethany of Martha and Mary  
Lk. 10:38–42
- f. Jesus teaches disciples about prayer  
Lk. 11:1–13

- g. Jesus speaks about casting out demons  
Lk. 11:14–36
- h. Jesus pronounces woe upon Pharisees and experts in the Law of Moses  
Mt. 23:1–39; Mk. 12:38–40; Lk. 11:37–54; 20:45–47
- i. Jesus warns disciples against blaspheming the Holy Spirit and tells parables of watchfulness  
Lk. 12:1–59
- j. Jesus tells parable of unfruitful fig tree  
Lk. 13:1–9
- k. Jesus is criticized for healing on the sabbath  
Lk. 13:10–17
- l. Jesus explains why only a few will be saved  
Lk. 13:22–30
- m. Some Pharisees warn Jesus that Herod is plotting to kill him  
Lk. 13:31–35
- n. Jesus tells of the cost of discipleship  
Lk. 14:25–33
- o. Jesus tells three parables on grace  
Lk. 15:1–32
- p. Jesus tells two parables on materialism  
Lk. 16:1–31
- q. Jesus teaches about faith and service  
Lk. 17:5–10
- r. Jesus heals the ten lepers—one returns to thank him  
Lk. 17:11–19
- s. Jesus speaks of the nature of the kingdom of God  
Lk. 17:20–37
- t. Jesus tells the parable of the widow and the judge  
Lk. 18:1–8
- u. Jesus tells the parable of the two men who went into the temple to pray  
Lk. 18:9–14

## **PART VI—Jesus Continues Teaching as He Goes to Jerusalem**

- a. Jesus answers the Pharisees' questions about marriage and divorce  
Mt. 19:3–12; Mk. 10:2–12
- b. Jesus blesses the little children  
Mt. 19:13–15; Mk. 10:13–16; Lk. 18:15–17

- c. The rich young ruler rejects Jesus  
Mt. 19:16–30; Mk. 10:17–31; Lk. 18:18–30
- d. Jesus tells the parable of workers in the vineyard  
Mt. 20:1–16
- e. Jesus foretells his death and resurrection for the third time  
Mt. 20:17–19; Mk. 10:32–34; Lk. 18:31–34
- f. James and John ask for preferential treatment  
Mt. 20:20–28; Mk. 10:35–45
- g. Jesus heals blind Bartimaeus near Jericho  
Mt. 20:29–34; Mk. 10:46–52; Lk. 18:35–43
- h. Jesus stays with Zacchaeus in Jericho  
Lk. 19:1–10
- i. Jesus tells the parable of the “pounds”  
Lk. 19:11–28
- j. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead at Bethany  
Jn. 11:1–44
- k. Jesus is condemned by the Jewish authorities  
Jn. 11:45–57

## PART VII—The Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus

- a. Jesus enters Jerusalem  
Mt. 21:1–11; Mk. 11:1–11; Lk. 19:29–44; Jn. 12:12–19
- b. Jesus curses the unfruitful fig tree  
Mt. 21:18–22; Mk. 11:12–14, 20–26
- c. Jesus cleanses the temple  
Mt. 21:12–17; Mk. 11:15–19; Lk. 19:45–48; Jn. 2:13–23
- d. Jewish authorities challenge the authority of Jesus  
Mt. 21:23–27; Mk. 11:27–33; Lk. 20:1–8
- e. Jesus tells three parables about the unfruitfulness of Israel  
Mt. 21:28–22:14; Mk. 12:1–12; Lk. 14:1–24; 20:9–19
- f. The Pharisees and Herodians question Jesus about taxes  
Mt. 22:15–22; Mk. 12:13–17; Lk. 20:20–26
- g. The Sadducees question Jesus about the resurrection  
Mt. 22:23–33; Mk. 12:18–27; Lk. 20:27–40
- h. The experts in the Mosaic Law question Jesus about the greatest commandment  
Mt. 22:34–40; Mk. 12:28–34; Lk. 10:25–28
- i. Jesus asks the Pharisees about the Messiah  
Mt. 22:41–46; Mk. 12:35–37; Lk. 20:41–44
- j. Jesus watches the temple treasury  
Mk. 12:41–44; Lk. 21:1–4

- k. Some Greeks look for Jesus while the Jews reject him  
Jn. 12:20–50
- l. Jesus foretells the destruction of Jerusalem  
Mt. 24:1–51; Mk. 13:1–37; Lk. 21:5–38
- m. Jesus tells the parable of the ten maidens  
Mt. 25:1–13
- n. Jesus tells of the judgment  
Mt. 25:31–46
- o. Judas Iscariot agrees to betray Jesus  
Mt. 26:1–5, 14–16; Mk. 14:1–2, 10–11; Lk. 22:1–6
- p. A woman anoints Jesus in Bethany  
Mt. 26:6–13; Mk. 14:3–9; Jn. 12:1–11
- q. Jesus and the Twelve prepare for the Passover  
Mt. 26:17–19; Mk. 14:12–16; Lk. 22:7–13
- r. Jesus washes the feet of the Twelve  
Jn. 13:1–20
- s. Jesus and the Twelve eat the Passover meal  
Mt. 26:20–25; Mk. 14:17–21; Jn. 13:21–35
- t. Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper  
Mt. 26:26–29; Mk. 14:22–25; Lk. 22:14–23
- u. Jesus tells the Twelve they will desert him  
Mt. 26:30–35; Mk. 14:26–31; Lk. 22:31–38; Jn. 13:36–38
- v. Jesus gives farewell address and promises the Counselor  
Jn. 14:1–17:26
- w. Jesus prays in Gethsemane and is betrayed and arrested  
Mt. 26:36–56; Mk. 14:32–52; Lk. 22:39–53; Jn. 18:1–12
- x. The trial of Jesus. The denial by Peter. The death of Judas  
Mt. 26:57–27:31; Mk. 14:53–15:20; Lk. 22:54–23:25;  
Jn. 18:13–19:16
- y. The “seven words” and the crucifixion  
Mt. 27:32–56; Mk. 15:21–41; Lk. 23:26–49; Jn. 19:17–37
- z. Joseph of Arimathea claims body of Jesus  
Mt. 27:57–66; Mk. 15:42–47; Lk. 23:50–56; Jn. 19:38–42

## PART VIII—The Resurrection of Jesus

- a. Jesus is arisen  
Mt. 28:1–7; Mk. 16:1–8; Lk. 24:1–11; Jn. 20:1–2
- b. Peter and John run to the tomb  
Lk. 24:12; Jn. 20:3–10
- c. Mary Magdalene sees the risen Jesus  
Mt. 28:8–10; Jn. 20:11–18

- d. The Jewish council conspires with the guards  
Mt. 28:11–15
- e. Jesus walks with the Emmaus disciples  
Lk. 24:13–35
- f. Jesus appears to the ten disciples in Jerusalem  
Lk. 24:36–49; Jn. 20:19–25
- g. Jesus appears to Thomas and the ten disciples  
Jn. 20:26–29
- h. Seven disciples see Jesus at Tiberias  
Jn. 21:1–23
- i. Jesus gives the Great Commission  
Mt. 28:16–20
- j. Jesus ascends into heaven  
Lk. 24:50–53
- k. The conclusion  
Jn. 20:30–31; 21:24–25

## PART I

# *The Early Life of Jesus Christ*

IN THE BEGINNING, before anything else Jn. 1:1-5 existed, Christ was with God. All things were created through him, and nothing was made without him. Eternal life exists in him, and that life is the hope of all mankind. That hope shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it.

Even though the whole world had been created through Jn. 1:9-18 Christ, yet the world did not know of his existence. He entered into the world of mankind, becoming flesh and living among us, full of grace and truth. Many of us were privileged to witness his glory, the glory as of the only Son from the Father. No one has ever seen God, but Jesus who is in the presence of the Father has made him known to us. And to everyone who receives him as the Messiah, he gives the authority to be the children of God. The law of God was handed down to us through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

The birth of John the Baptist preceded the coming of Lk. 1:5-7 Christ into the world, and this is the story of that birth which took place during the rule of Herod the Great as

king of the province of Judea. In Judea lived a devout couple, a priest named Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth. They had no children, and both were now well advanced in age.

Lk. 1:8-17     One day it was Zechariah's privilege as a priest to burn incense at the altar in the temple during the time of prayer. It was customary for a large crowd to gather during the time of prayer to murmur their prayers outside the temple. This particular day an angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah while he ministered at the altar of incense. Zechariah was troubled and afraid, but the angel assured him, saying, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayers for a child have been heard, and Elizabeth will bear you a son whom you shall call John. You will rejoice, and many will rejoice with you at this birth. God has a special task for your son. He will drink no wine or strong drink. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth, going forth in the spirit and power of Elijah to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah."

Lk. 1:18-20     Zechariah asked the angel, "How shall I know this is true? My wife and I are too old to have children." The angel answered, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God. I was sent to speak to you this message. These words shall surely be fulfilled in due time, but since you question my words, you will be unable to speak until the day these things are fulfilled."

Lk. 1:21-22     The people who were waiting outside were puzzled about the delay of Zechariah in the temple. When he did appear, he could not speak. He made signs and gestures to them, and they eventually understood that he had seen a vision.

Lk. 1:24-33     When Elizabeth later became pregnant, she hid herself for the first five months. During the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to Nazareth, in Galilee,

to a virgin named Mary who was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, who was a descendant of King David. Gabriel said to Mary, "Hail, favored one, the Lord is with you!" Mary was puzzled over such a greeting, but the angel said, "Do not be concerned, Mary, for you have found favor with God. You will soon become pregnant and have a son, and you shall call his name Jesus (this is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Joshua*, which means, *the Lord is salvation*). He will be called the Son of the Most High God, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and his kingdom will be eternal."

Mary asked the angel, "How can this be, since I am not yet married?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and therefore the child will be called holy, the Son of God. Your cousin Elizabeth has never had any children; but now in her old age she has become pregnant with a son. She is now in her sixth month of pregnancy. With God nothing is impossible." Mary then said, "I will do whatever the Lord wants of me." Then the angel departed. Lk. 1:34-38

Mary went into the hill country of Judah, to the city where Zechariah and Elizabeth lived. As Elizabeth and Mary were exchanging greetings, the baby in Elizabeth's womb made a sudden movement. Elizabeth, being filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesied concerning Mary: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! How thrilling it is that the mother of my Lord should come to me." Mary replied: Lk. 1:39-46a

"My soul praises the Lord, and my spirit delights in God my Savior, for he has respect even for the humble estate of his servant. From now on, all generations will call me blessed; for the mighty God has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy rests on those Lk. 1:46b-55

who trust him from generation to generation. He has shown the strength of his power. He opposes the proud in their vain imagination. He has deposed the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those who are humble and poor. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the wealthy he has sent away empty. In his mercy he has remembered his servant Israel, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity forever."

Lk. 1:56-66

Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months, and then she returned to her home. In due time Elizabeth gave birth to her son. Her neighbors and relatives rejoiced with her, and they gathered on the eighth day for the circumcision of the child. They suggested that the child should be named Zechariah after his father, but Elizabeth insisted that he should be called John. They all argued with her, saying, "But none of your relatives is called by that name." They even made signs to Zechariah asking how he wanted his son named. Zechariah asked for a writing tablet, and to the surprise of everyone he wrote, "His name is John." Immediately Zechariah was able to speak again. These things were talked about through the whole countryside, and people wondered, "What then will this child become?" They knew the hand of the Lord was on him.

Lk. 1:67

Zechariah, being filled with the Holy Spirit, prophesied concerning his son:

Lk. 1:68-78a

"Bless the Lord God of Israel, for he has come to redeem his people, and has lifted up for us a power of salvation in the house of his servant David, even as he promised by his holy prophets of old, that we should be spared from our enemies, to remember his holy covenant which he established with our father Abraham, and to return to the mercy our fathers enjoyed. And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High God, for you shall go ahead of the Lord to prepare his way. You

will teach his people of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, which is theirs through the tender mercies of our God."

In those days a decree went out from emperor Caesar Augustus that everyone in the empire should be enrolled for tax purposes, each in his own city. Joseph went from Nazareth, in the province of Galilee, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, in the province of Judea, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his fiancée who was now far along in her pregnancy. The little city was crowded with travelers, and there being no room in the inn, Joseph and Mary stayed in a stable. There she gave birth to her first-born son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger. Lk. 2:1-7

In that region shepherds were still grazing their sheep in the fields. One night an angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds, and they were engulfed in the glory of the Lord. The shepherds were filled with fear. The angel said, "Do not be afraid, for I bring you wonderful good news which will come to all people. A Savior, who is Christ the Lord, is born this day in the city of David. And this will be a sign that you may know what I have said to you is true: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." With the angel was a large number of heavenly beings praising God and saying, "Glory to God Almighty, and peace upon everyone with whom he is pleased!" Lk. 2:8-14

When the angels departed, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing which the Lord has made known to us." They went and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. They told Joseph and Mary what had been told to them by the angel concerning this child. Everyone who heard Lk. 2:15-20

the shepherds' report marveled, but Mary kept all these things in her heart, pondering them. Then the shepherds returned to their flocks, glorifying and praising God.

Lk. 2:21-24     When the baby was eight days old, he was circumcised and was called Jesus, the name given by the angel. When the time came for the purification of the parents according to the law of Moses (forty days after the birth), Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord and to offer the sacrifice prescribed in the law (a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons).

Lk. 2:25-32     Now there was a righteous and devout man in Jerusalem named Simeon, who was patiently awaiting the promised Messiah. The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. When Joseph and Mary brought the child Jesus into the temple, Simeon took Jesus in his arms, and being inspired by the Holy Spirit, he blessed God saying, "Lord, now you can let your servant depart this earth in peace, according to your promise; for my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a hope for the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel."

Lk. 2:33-35     Joseph and Mary marveled at what was said about Jesus. Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary, "Behold, this is not an ordinary child; for he is destined for the fall and rising of many people in Israel. Many will speak against him (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), and the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed."

Lk. 2:36-38     An old prophetess was in the temple when Jesus was brought in. Her name was Anna, and she spent much of her time in the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer. When she saw Jesus, she gave thanks and praise to God, and she prophesied many things concerning

Jesus to all the people who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem.

Shortly after Jesus had been born in Bethlehem, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? We have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." Herod the Great, king of the province of Judea, heard of this and was worried, as were others in Jerusalem. Herod called the Jewish council into assembly, and inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They informed him of what the scriptures said: "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who shall govern my people Israel." Mt. 2:1-6

Herod sent for the wise men secretly and learned from them what time this star had appeared. Then Herod sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too might come and worship him." As the wise men went on their way, they rejoiced because the star which they had seen in the East went before them. At last the star came to rest over the place where Jesus was, and going into that house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way. Mt. 2:7-12

When they had departed, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod plans to search for the child and destroy him." Joseph obeyed the angel immediately. Mt. 2:13-14

When Herod discovered that he had been tricked, he Mt. 2:16-18

was furious with rage, and he ordered his soldiers to kill all male children two years of age and under in Bethlehem and the surrounding region. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentations; Rachel was weeping for her children. She refused to be consoled, because the children were no more."

MT. 2:15, 19-23

When Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Take the mother and child and return to the land of Israel." This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken to the prophets saying, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." Joseph and his family went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophet might be fulfilled: "He shall be called a Nazarene."

LUK. 2:41-52

When Jesus was twelve years old, Joseph and Mary went to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover, which was their custom every year. After the feast, Joseph and Mary returned home, but Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. Joseph and Mary traveled all day, supposing Jesus to be somewhere among their company. In the evening they looked for him among the relatives and acquaintances. When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. Three days later they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. His parents were astonished when they saw him. His mother said, "Son, why have you treated us this way? Your father and I have been searching for you anxiously." Jesus replied, "Why did you have to search for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" Joseph and Mary did not understand what Jesus meant by this, but Mary kept all these things in her heart.

Jesus was obedient to his parents, and he returned with them to Nazareth. There he increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man.

— Here is a silent period of eighteen years —

John, the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth, grew to manhood, becoming strong in body and spirit. He preached throughout the wilderness of the province of Judea, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." John was the fulfillment of the prophecy spoken through Isaiah: "The voice of one shouting in the wilderness: 'Get ready for the coming of the Lord, make the road straight for him.'"

Lk. 1:80  
Mt. 3:1-3

John wore a simple garment woven of camel's hair, held in at the waist by a leather belt. He ate the simple foods of the desert, pods from the locust tree and honey. People came out from Jerusalem and all the surrounding cities to hear him, and they were baptized by him in the Jordan River, after confessing their sins.

Mt. 3:4-6

When John saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism too, he said to them, "You brood of snakes. Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? You ought to live your lives so they reveal that you have repented of your evil ways, and do not continue to say, 'We have Abraham as our father.' Let me remind you, God is able from these very stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe of judgment is falling; the good will be spared, but the evil will be destroyed." John told the people, "I baptize you with water for repentance, but there is one who comes after me who is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and

Mt. 3:7-12

with fire. He is the one who will separate the good from the evil.”

Mt. 3:13, 16-17

One day Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan, to be baptized by John. As soon as Jesus came up from the water, John saw the heavens opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on Jesus. A voice was heard from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

Mt. 4:1-4

Then Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and nights, Jesus was hungry. Satan, the tempter, said to him, “If you truly are the Son of God, why don’t you command these stones to become loaves of bread?” Jesus replied, “It is written in the scriptures, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

Mt. 4:5-7

Then the devil took Jesus to the holy city, and set him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying, “If you truly are the Son of God, why don’t you throw yourself down from here? The scriptures say, ‘God’s angels will protect you,’ and ‘On their hands they will uphold you, and keep you from falling.’” Jesus replied, “The scriptures also say, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to a test.’”

Mt. 4:8-11

Then the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain where he could see all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and he said, “I will put you in charge of all these if you will bow down and worship me.” Jesus replied, “Leave me alone, Satan, for it is written in the scriptures, ‘You shall worship and serve only the Lord your God.’” Then the devil left him, and angels came and ministered to Jesus.

## PART II

# *Jesus Begins His Public Ministry*

THE JEWISH authorities sent priests and religious leaders from Jerusalem to ask John, “Who are you? Are you Elijah? Are you the prophet? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” John replied, “I am not the Christ. I am merely a voice crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord.’ ” Jn. 1:19-23

The following day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said of him, “Here comes the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! He is the one I was referring to when I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, for he existed before me.’ I myself did not know him, but I was called to a ministry of baptizing for the very purpose that he might be revealed to Israel. When God called me to this ministry of baptism, he said to me, ‘The one on whom you see the Holy Spirit descend and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ I saw the Holy Spirit descend as a dove from heaven upon this man, and I testify to the fact that he is the Son of God.” Jn. 1:29-34

**Jn. 1:35-42** Two of John's disciples heard John referring to Jesus as the Lamb of God, and they followed after Jesus. Jesus asked them, "What are you searching for?" They answered, "Teacher, where are you staying?" Jesus replied, "Come and see." They followed Jesus and remained with him that day. One of them was named Andrew, and he went and found his brother Simon, and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). Then Andrew brought Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked at Simon intensely and said, "So you are Simon? You shall be called Cephas" (Aramaic for large stone. The Greek equivalent is Peter)."

**Jn. 1:43-51** The following day Jesus went to the province of Galilee. There he found Philip, and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip and Andrew and Peter were from Bethsaida. Philip in turn went and found Nathanael, and said, "We have found the one of whom Moses and the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael replied, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said, "Come and see." When Jesus saw Nathanael coming, he said of him, "Look what we have here! An Israelite in whom there is no guile!" Nathanael asked Jesus, "How do you know me?" Jesus replied, "Even before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael exclaimed, "Teacher, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus said, "Do you believe in me simply because I said that I saw you under the fig tree? You shall see greater things than that. You will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon me."

**Jn. 2:1-12** A few days later, Mary, the mother of Jesus, was invited to a marriage at Cana in the province of Galilee. Jesus and his disciples were also invited. During the celebration, the host ran out of wine, and Mary brought this to the attention of Jesus. Then she instructed the

servants, "Do whatever he tells you." There were six stone jars standing nearby for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus instructed the servants to fill the jars with water. They filled all of them to the brim. Then Jesus said, "Now fill a pitcher and take it to the steward of the feast." When the steward of the feast tasted the water now become wine, he called the bridegroom and said, "Everyone else serves the good wine first, and when people have drunk freely, then they serve the poor wine. But you have kept the very best wine until now." This was the first of the miracles that Jesus performed which manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him.

A short time after that, Jesus went to Jerusalem to observe the feast of Passover. There he performed several miracles, and many people believed in his name. However, Jesus did not trust himself to them, because he knew all men and needed no one to tell him about man's nature; for he himself knew what was in man.

Jn. 2:23-25

One night while Jesus was in Jerusalem, he was visited by Nicodemus, a Pharisee who was a member of the Jewish Council. Nicodemus said, "Teacher, we know that you are sent by God, for no one can do the miracles that you do unless God is with him." Jesus answered, "Truly I tell you, unless a person is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus asked, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter again into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus replied, "That is not what I mean by saying you must be born again. I mean that unless a person is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. The flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. The wind blows wherever it wants to, and you can hear the sound of it, but you do not know from where it comes or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is

Jn. 3:1-15

born of the Spirit.” Nicodemus asked Jesus, “How can these things be?” Jesus rebuked him gently, saying, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and you do not understand these things? Truly I tell you, I testify to the things I have seen, but you will not receive this testimony. If you can’t believe the earthly things I tell you, how can you possibly believe when I tell you heavenly things? The Son of man, who was in heaven, has now descended from heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.”

Jn. 3:16–21

The apostle John elaborates this point by saying, “For God so loved sinful mankind that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but so that the world might be saved through him. He who believes in Jesus is not condemned, but he who does not believe in him is condemned already because he has not believed in the only Son of God. And this is the judgment, that God’s light has come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than God’s light, because of their evil ways. Everyone who does evil hates God’s light, for they know their deeds will be exposed in that light. But he who does what is right comes into that light knowing that it will reveal that his ways have been wrought in God.”

Jn. 3:22–30; 4:2

Jesus and his disciples then went into the province of Judea. They remained in that region for a time, and Jesus taught all who came to him, and the disciples baptized those who repented. Jesus baptized no one. John the Baptist was also ministering in that same area. After a time, the disciples of John realized that more people were going to Jesus than were going to John, and a discussion arose among John’s disciples. They said to John, “Teacher, that Jesus who was with you beyond the

Jordan, to whom you gave witness, is now with his disciples ministering in this same area, and everyone is going to him.” John replied, “I told you before that I am not the Christ. My calling from God was to go before the Christ. I am not the bridegroom, but merely a friend of the bridegroom who stands beside him. My joy is now complete because I have heard the bridegroom’s voice. He must increase, but I must decrease.”

The Pharisees soon became aware of the increasing popularity of Jesus, and so to avoid trouble with them, Jesus decided to leave Judea. He and his disciples then headed toward the province of Galilee. Normally the Jews avoided passing through Samaria, but Jesus felt compelled to pass through that region. In Samaria they stopped at Jacob’s well at the city of Sychar, near a field that the patriarch Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jesus was weary from traveling, and he rested beside the well while his disciples went into the city to buy food. Jn. 4:1, 3-6

Jesus was thirsty, but he had nothing with which to draw water from the deep well. Normally the women from the community drew water in the cool morning and evening hours, and it was now noon. It wasn’t long, however, before a woman came for water during that hot hour of the day. She was surprised when Jesus asked her for a drink. She asked, “You’re a Jew! How come you are asking a Samaritan woman for a drink?” (Jewish teachers avoided all contact with women in public, and Jews never shared the same dishes or utensils with Samaritans.) Jesus said, “If you knew anything about the gift of God, and if you knew who I am, you would have asked me for a drink, and I would have given you living water.” The woman replied, “Sir, you have nothing with which to draw water, and the well is deep. Where would you get the living water? Our ancestor Jacob had to dig Jn. 4:7-15

this well. Can you do something greater than that?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him shall never thirst again. The water that I give a person becomes in him a spring of water which will satisfy him for all time and eternity." The woman spoke pleadingly to Jesus: "Sir, please give me this water so that I may never thirst nor have to return to draw water again."

Jn. 4:16-26 Jesus said, "Go, bring your husband here." The woman answered, "I have no husband." Jesus said, "You are truthful in saying you have no husband, for you have had five husbands, and the man you are now living with is not your husband." The woman said, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our ancestors have always worshiped God on Mount Gerizim here, but you Jews insist that the temple in Jerusalem is where men ought to worship." Jesus replied, "Woman, listen to me! The Father is not worshiped correctly either on this mountain or in Jerusalem. The time has come when the Father wants true worshipers who will worship him in spirit and truth; not in the letter of the law as the Jews do, but in the spirit of the law; and not in the confusion of the Samaritans, but in the truth of God. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." The woman said, "I believe that the Christ is coming. When he arrives, he will show us all things." Jesus said, "The one to whom you are speaking is the Christ."

Jn. 4:27-30 The disciples returned and were surprised to see Jesus talking with a woman. The woman left in such a hurry that she forgot her water jar. She told the people in the city, "Come, see a man who told me everything that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" They all went out of the city to hear Jesus.

Meanwhile the disciples urged Jesus to eat, but he said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." The disciples asked one another, "Has anyone brought him food?" Jesus replied, "My food is to do the will of the Father who sent me, and to accomplish his work. People look over their crops and say, 'There are yet four months until the harvest,' but I tell you, look at the fields of humanity (Samaritans were now streaming out toward the well). They are already ripe for harvest. The saying holds true here, too: 'One sows and another reaps.' I am sending you to reap that which you did not sow. Others have sown and you now enter into their labors."

Jn. 4:31-38

Many of the Samaritans already believed that Jesus was the Christ when they had heard the woman's testimony. As soon as they arrived at the well, they asked Jesus to remain with them. He remained there two days. After hearing him teach, many more became believers. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of your testimony that we believe, for we have heard him with our own ears. We know that this is indeed the Savior of the world."

Jn. 4:39-42

Then Jesus and his disciples continued their journey to the province of Galilee, even though Jesus had told them that a prophet has no honor in his own country. When they arrived in Galilee, the people welcomed Jesus, because many of them had seen the miracles that he had performed in Jerusalem during the feast of Passover.

Jn. 4:43-45

Jesus ministered for a time in the village of Cana, where he had changed the water into wine. While he was there, a government official from Capernaum came looking for Jesus. When he found him, he begged Jesus to come to Capernaum to heal his son who was very ill and near death. Jesus said to him, "Why do you insist

Jn. 4:46-53

upon seeing miracles before you will believe the message?" The official replied, "Sir, please come to Capernaum before my child dies." Jesus said, "Go home. Your son will live." The man believed Jesus and went on his way. As the official was returning home, his servants came to meet him and report that his son was living. He asked the servants at what hour his son had started to get well. They replied, "Early yesterday afternoon the fever left him." The father knew that was the very hour that Jesus had told him, "Your son will live." Then the father's faith in Jesus was confirmed by this experience, and sharing this with his family, he led them, too, to believe in Jesus.

Lk. 4:14-15      Jesus ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit throughout the countryside of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and being highly respected and honored by everyone.

Lk. 4:16-19      One sabbath day, Jesus went to the synagogue in Nazareth where he had grown up. He was asked to read that day, and he was handed the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Jesus unrolled the scroll and found the place where the prophet had written: "The Holy Spirit is upon me and has anointed me to preach the good news to the destitute, to heal the broken-hearted, to proclaim deliverance to those held captive and recovery of sight to the blind, to release those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Lk. 4:20-30      Then Jesus closed the book, and handed it back to the attendant and sat down. Everyone in the synagogue fixed their eyes on him. Jesus said, "Today this scripture you have heard has been fulfilled." Everyone had thought well of Jesus, and now they were puzzled at the words he had spoken. They asked each other, "Isn't this Joseph's son?" Jesus said, "Undoubtedly many of you want me to

perform the same miracles here as you have heard were performed in Capernaum. Truly I tell you, no prophet is acceptable in his own country. Let me remind you that there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when there was no rain for three and a half years. During that great famine, Elijah was sent only to a widow who lived in Zarephath, in the province of Sidon. Also remember that there were many lepers in Israel during the time of the prophet Elisha, but only Naaman the Syrian was cleansed from the disease.” Hearing Jesus speak like this, everyone in the synagogue became angry. They grabbed Jesus and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city is built, intending to throw him over. But Jesus eluded them and went away.

Wherever Jesus went, people crowded around him to hear him speak the word of God. One morning as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, being followed by a large crowd, he saw Peter and his fishing partners, James and John, sons of Zebedee. They were washing their nets beside their two boats. Jesus got into Peter’s boat, and he asked the fishermen to push the boat out into the water a little way. Jesus sat down and taught the people from the boat. When he finished, he told Peter, “Put out into the deep water now, and let down your nets for a catch.” Peter said, “Master, we fished all night and didn’t catch a thing! But since you say so, we will give it another try.” The net enclosed such a large school of fish, the net started to break. They signaled for James and John to bring the other boat out and help them. Both boats were so full of fish that they were riding low in the water. Peter was so overwhelmed by this miracle, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinner.” James and John were also astonished at the large catch of fish they had taken.

Lk. 5:1-11

Jesus said, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will be catching men." When they brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed Jesus.

Mk. 1:21-22 They went to Capernaum where Peter lived. On the sabbath, Jesus went to the synagogue and taught. Everyone was astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority and not as the scribes.

Mk. 1:23-28 In the synagogue was a man with an unclean spirit, and the spirit cried out, "What are you planning to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Are you planning to destroy us? I know who you are. You are the Holy One promised by God." Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, saying, "Keep quiet, and come out of him!" The unclean spirit, convulsing the man, came out screaming with a loud voice. Everyone was amazed, and they asked questions among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching! With authority he commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him." Reports of Jesus went into every place in the surrounding area.

Lk. 4:38-39 When the synagogue service concluded, Jesus returned to Peter's home. Peter's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever. Jesus stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. Immediately she arose and served them.

Lk. 4:40-41 When the sun had set, marking the end of the Jewish sabbath, people who were ailing with various diseases were brought to Jesus. He laid his hands on them and healed every one of them. Demons also came out of many screaming, "You are the Son of God!" Jesus rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ.

Mt. 4:23-25 Jesus went throughout all the province of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and preaching the good news of the kingdom of God and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people. His fame even

spread throughout all Syria, and the Syrians brought to him all their sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pain, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics. Jesus healed them all. Large crowds followed Jesus from the various towns in Galilee. They came from the Ten Greek Cities, from Jerusalem, and from all over Judea and even beyond the Jordan.

When the people tried to keep Jesus from leaving them, he told them, "I was sent to preach the good news of the kingdom of God to other cities too." Lk. 4:42-43

One day a leper knelt before Jesus, pleading, "If you want to, you have the power to make me clean." Jesus was moved with pity. He stretched out his hand and touched the man, saying, "I want to. Be healed!" Immediately the leprosy left the man, and he was healed. Jesus told him, "Don't stop to talk to anyone. Go and show yourself to the priest. Let him examine you and give you a clean bill of health. Then make the offering for your cleansing as Moses commanded, so that people will know you are healed." The man, however, spoke freely about his healing, and when the news was spread around, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly. He ministered throughout the countryside, and people came out to him from everywhere. Mk. 1:40-45

After some time Jesus returned to Capernaum, and the news spread rapidly throughout the community that Jesus was staying in a certain home. A large crowd gathered, filling the house. They even clustered around outside the door. As Jesus was preaching to them the good news, four men brought a paralytic on a stretcher, wanting Jesus to heal him. When the men could not get near Jesus because of the crowd, they removed a portion of the roof, and lowered the man on the stretcher down to Jesus. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven." There were some Mk. 2:1-12

scribes in the crowd, and when they heard Jesus say this, questions were raised in their minds: "How can a man dare say such a thing? It is blasphemy! No one can forgive sins but God alone." Jesus perceived in his spirit what their questions were, and he replied, "Why do you entertain such questions in your minds? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your stretcher and walk'? I am doing this that you may know that I have authority on earth to forgive sins." Then turning to the paralytic, Jesus said, "Get up off your stretcher and go home." The man got up, took up his stretcher, and went out in view of them all. Everyone was amazed, and they praised God, saying, "We never saw anything like this before!"

MT. 9:9-13     One day Jesus saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office in Capernaum. Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and be my disciple." Matthew rose and followed him. Later, Jesus and his disciples were having dinner at Matthew's house. Many dishonest tax collectors were guests also. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked Jesus' disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with swindlers?" Jesus heard this and said, "Those who are well don't need a physician. Only those who are sick. I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. Meditate about what God means when he says, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.'"

MT. 9:14-17     One day some disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked, "Why do we fast twice a week like the Pharisees do, but your disciples do not fast?" Jesus answered, "Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? The day will come when the bridegroom is taken away. Then his disciples will fast. No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth to an old garment. If he does, the new patch will tear away from the old cloth, and a worse tear will be made. Nor does anyone put new

wine into an old wineskin. If he does, the new wine will burst the old skin, and the wine will be lost as well as the skin."

From Capernaum, Jesus moved on toward Jerusalem for the observance of one of the religious holidays. In Jerusalem there was a pool called Bethesda, where a great many invalids gathered. They believed that an angel occasionally stirred up the water in the pool, and the first one into the water after it was stirred up would be healed. The invalids, the blind, the lame, and the paralyzed waited in five porches that surrounded the pool. One paralyzed man had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there on his mat, Jesus asked him, "Do you want to be healed?" The sick man answered, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up. While I am crawling to get into the water, someone gets there ahead of me." Jesus said to him, "Get up, take your mat, and walk." At once the man was healed, and he walked. Jn. 5:1-9a

It was the sabbath when Jesus healed this man. When the authorities asked the man who had healed him, the man did not know who Jesus was. But later when the man went to the temple to give thanks to God, he saw Jesus there. Jesus said to him, "I see you are well and walking. Sin no more, or something worse will happen to you." Learning who Jesus was, the man reported to the Jewish authorities that Jesus was the one who had healed him at Bethesda. The authorities had received similar reports about Jesus, and they began to persecute him. When they confronted Jesus with his violation of the sabbath regulations, Jesus said, "My Father is working still, and I am working, too." It made the Jewish authorities all the angrier because Jesus called God his Father, making himself equal with God. Jn. 5:9b-18

Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, the Christ can do nothing Jn. 5:19-24

of his own accord. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son does also. The Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. God will show him even greater things that will astonish you. Just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom-ever he wants. The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, so that everyone may honor the Son even as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me, has eternal life. He passes from death to life, and doesn't come into judgment."

*Jn. 5:25-29* Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, the hour is near when those who are dead in sin will hear the voice of the Christ. Those who listen to him will have new life. Just as the Father has the power to give new life, so has he granted this same power to the Son. He has also given him authority to execute judgment. Do not marvel at this, for the hour is near when all who are dead in the tombs will also hear the voice of Christ and will come forth. Those who have done good, will enjoy eternal life, and those who have done evil, will face the judgment."

*Jn. 5:30-47* Jesus continued, "I do nothing on my own authority. I judge according to what I hear from the Father. My judgment is just, because I speak not my own will but the will of him who sent me. Were I to tell you that I am the Christ, you would not believe my testimony. But John the Baptist also bears witness to me, and that testimony is true. You went out and listened to him because he told you the truth. He was a bright and shining light, and you were willing to listen for a while and rejoice in what you heard. But the testimony which I have is greater than that of John. These very things I am doing

are the things which the Father has sent me to do. These bear witness that the Father has sent me. The Father who sent me has himself borne witness to me. You have never heard his voice, and you have never seen his form. Nor do you have his word abiding in you, because you do not believe him whom he has sent. You search the scriptures because you think in them you will have eternal life. But the scriptures bear witness to me. Yet you refuse to come to me that you may have eternal life. I do not receive glory from men, but I know that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. But if someone were to come in his own name, you would receive him. How can you possibly believe! You are concerned about receiving glory from one another, but you do not care about the glory that comes from God. I don't have to accuse you to the Father. You have set your hopes on the law of Moses and it is that law that accuses you. If you really believed what Moses wrote, you would believe in me. For Moses wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how can you possibly believe what I say?"

One sabbath Jesus and his disciples were walking through the countryside. As they walked through a grain field, they grabbed handfuls of grain to nibble along the way. Seeing them do this, the Pharisees asked Jesus, "Look, why are they allowed to disregard the sabbath regulations?" Jesus replied, "Haven't you read in the scriptures what David and his men did when they were hungry? They entered the house of God and ate the holy bread which it is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests." Then he added, "The Christ is Lord even of the sabbath; and the sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath."

MK. 2:23-28

On another sabbath, when Jesus entered the synagogue

Lk. 6:6-11

and taught, a man was there whose right hand was paralyzed. The scribes and Pharisees were watching Jesus to see whether he would heal this man on the sabbath. They were looking for an accusation against him. Jesus knew their thoughts, and he said to the man with the paralyzed hand, "Come and stand by me." When the man was standing next to Jesus, Jesus asked the scribes and Pharisees, "What is legal on the sabbath? To do good or to do harm? To save life or to destroy it?" Then Jesus looked around at everyone and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." When the man did so, his hand was restored. The scribes and Pharisees were furious with Jesus, and they discussed with one another what they ought to do to him.

MT. 12:15-17     Jesus was aware of their plotting, so he withdrew from there. Many who were ailing followed after him, and Jesus healed them all, and ordered them not to reveal who had healed them. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah:

MT. 12:18-21     "Behold, my chosen and beloved servant with whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him, and he shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick till he brings justice to victory. In his name will the Gentiles hope."

## PART III

# *Jesus Selects and Instructs the Twelve Apostles*

ONE DAY Jesus went out into the hills to pray, and he continued in prayer to God all night. At dawn he called his disciples together, and from them he chose twelve, whom he named apostles: Peter, his brother Andrew, James and John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon who is called the Zealot, Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot who became the traitor. Lk. 6:12-16

Jesus and his disciples came down from the hills and they met a large crowd coming to meet Jesus. People had come from Jerusalem and other cities in the province of Judea, from the seacoast areas of Tyre and Sidon, and from all over to listen to Jesus. Everyone tried to touch Jesus, for power came forth from him. He healed them all. Those who were troubled with unclean spirits were also cured. Lk. 6:17-19

Seeing the large crowd that was gathering, Jesus went up on a mountainside overlooking the Sea of Galilee. There he sat down, and as his disciples gathered around him, Jesus taught them, saying: Mt. 5:1-32

"Blessed are the humble in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are those who control their passions, for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

"Blessed are those whose motives are pure, for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and speak evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven. Always remember that people persecuted the prophets before you in the very same manner.

Mt. 5:13 "You are the salt of the earth. If salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be used as gravel.

Mt. 5:14-16 "You are the light in this world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men turn on a lamp and hide it under the bed, but rather put it where it will give light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that your good works will glorify your heavenly Father.

Mt. 5:17-20 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Old Testament. I did not come to abolish it, but to fulfill it. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not a comma or a period will pass from the Old Testament until all is accomplished. Whoever then ignores even the simplest scriptural teachings, and teaches

others to do so, too, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But those who believe them and teach them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Let me remind you, that unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

“You have heard that it was said to our ancestors, Mt. 5:21-26  
‘You shall not commit murder; and whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ But I tell you that whoever is even slightly angry with his brother shall be liable to the judgment of the Jewish Civil Court; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the Jewish Council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be liable to eternal destruction. Therefore, if you are offering a gift at the altar, and remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift at the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift to God. Make friends quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court. Otherwise your accuser will hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be put in prison. Truly, I tell you, you will not be released until you have paid the full price.

“You have heard that it was said to our ancestors, Mt. 5:27-30  
‘You shall not commit adultery.’ I tell you that everyone who looks at a person lustfully has already committed adultery in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell. Moral purity must be maintained at all costs.

“It was also said to our ancestors, Mt. 5:31-32  
‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ I tell

you that whoever divorces his wife, except on the grounds of unchastity, makes her an adulteress. And whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Mt. 5:33-37     “Again you have heard that it was said to our ancestors, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord everything you have sworn.’ I tell you, Do not swear at all! Neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God, nor by earth, for it is his footstool, nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor should you swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No.’ Anything more than that comes from the evil one.

Mt. 5:38-42     “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ I tell you, Do not resist one who is evil. If someone insults you, do not defend yourself. If anyone takes you to court and sues you for your shirt, let him have your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to anyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

Mt. 5:43-48     “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ I tell you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your heavenly Father. He allows his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust. If you love only those who love you, what reward have you? Even sinners do that much. If you greet only your Jewish neighbors, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do that much? You must learn to be merciful even as your heavenly Father is merciful.

Mt. 6:1-4     “Do not practice your piety for the purpose of getting praise from men, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. When you give a donation to someone, do not brag about it. This is what the hypo-

crites do in the synagogue so that men will praise them. Believe me, they have their reward. When you give your donations, give them secretly. Your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“When you pray, do not imitate the hypocrites. They Mt. 6:5-13 love to stand and pray in public to be seen by others. Believe me, they have their reward. But when you pray, pray privately, and your Father who sees everything will reward you. Don’t recite meaningless prayers over and over like the heathen do. They think they will be heard because of their frequent repetition. Don’t imitate them, for your heavenly Father knows what you need even before you ask him. When you pray, pray something like this:

“Our Father in heaven, we honor your holy name. We ask for your kingdom to come, and that your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us whatever we need for this day. And forgive us our sins insofar as we also have forgiven those who have sinned against us. Allow us not to be tempted beyond our strength, and deliver us from the evil one. Amen.

“If you forgive men their sins against you, your Mt. 6:14-15 heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins against you, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your sins.

“When you fast, do not imitate the hypocrites by Mt. 6:16-18 looking dismal. They disfigure their faces so people will know they are fasting. Believe me, they have their reward. But when you fast, keep your fasting a secret from others. Your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

“Do not store up material treasures that moth and rust Mt. 6:19-21 consume and that thieves can steal, but store up treasures in heaven, where nothing can destroy them. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Mt. 6:22-23     “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, if your vision is clouded by the love of money, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

Mt. 6:24     “No person can be loyal to two opposing masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot be loyal to God and materialism at the same time.

Mt. 6:25-34     “Don’t worry about your life, wondering what you shall eat or drink, or what you should wear. Life is more important than food or clothing. Look at the birds of the air. They don’t plant crops nor store grain in barns. Yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than birds? Which of you can add one day to your life by worrying about it? Or why worry about clothing? Look at the wild lilies. They don’t work or sow. Yet even Solomon in his splendor was not clothed like one of these. If God so attractively dresses the short-lived grass of the field, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore don’t worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first to be a member of his kingdom, and live your life as he wants you to live, and all these things shall be yours as well. Therefore don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will have cares of its own. Let today’s own problems be sufficient for today.

Mt. 7:1-5     “Don’t judge others, or they in turn will judge you in the same way. The standard of judgment you pronounce, will be the standard of judgment pronounced against you. Why do you look for the speck in your brother’s eye while you ignore the log that is in your own eye? How can you presume to take the speck out of someone

else's eye when the log is still in your own eye? That is hypocritical! First take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of someone else's eye.

“Do not share the pearls of your faith in God with anyone who does not respect godly things. They will only profane that which is precious. Mt. 7:6

“Keep on asking and you will receive. Keep on knocking and you will find. Keep on knocking and the door will be opened to you. Everyone who keeps asking receives, he who keeps looking finds, and to him who keeps knocking, the door will be opened. If your child asks for bread, would you give him a stone? Even you who are evil are willing to give good gifts to your children. How much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him! Mt. 7:7-11

“If you want others to treat you well, you should treat them in like manner. This is the teaching of the scriptures! Mt. 7:12

“There are two gateways to life. The gate is wide and the road is broad that leads to destruction. Many choose this way! But the gate is narrow and the road is difficult that leads to eternal life, and there are few who go this way. Mt. 7:13-14

“Beware of false prophets. They are ravenous wolves disguised as innocent sheep, but you can recognize them by their fruit. You do not gather grapes from thorn bushes, nor figs from thistle plants, do you? Every good tree produces good fruit, and every bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you can recognize the false prophets by their fruits. Not everyone that says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven. Only those who do the will of my Mt. 7:15-23

heavenly Father. On the day of judgment, many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and did we not cast out demons in your name, and in your name did we not do many miracles?' Then I will publicly declare to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of evil.'

Mt. 7:24-27      "Every one then who hears my words and obeys them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock. When the rain fell and the floods came, and the wind blew against that house, it did not fall, because it had been established on the rock. But every one who hears my words and does not obey them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. When the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew against that house, it fell, and great was the fall of it."

Mt. 7:28-29      When Jesus finished speaking, the crowds were astonished at his teaching. For he taught as one who had authority and not as their scribes.

Mt. 8:5-13      As Jesus returned to Capernaum, a Roman commander met him, and pleaded with him, "Sir, my servant is completely paralyzed at home, in terrible distress." When Jesus offered to come and heal him, the commander said, "Sir, I am not worthy to have you come into my house. Just say the word, and my servant will be healed. I am a man who understands authority, for I have many soldiers under me. Whatever I command them to do, they do." Jesus marveled at this display of faith, and he spoke to those around him, saying, "Truly I tell you, I have not found such faith in all of Israel. Let me tell you, many Gentiles will come from east and west and fellowship with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while many sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness where men will weep and grind their teeth." Then to the Roman commander, Jesus said,

“Go on home. Be it done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed at that very moment.

Soon afterward Jesus went to a city called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd followed after him. As he drew near to the gate of the city, they met a funeral procession. A man, the only son of a widow, had died, and a large crowd was taking him to his tomb. Jesus had compassion on the widow and said to her, “Do not weep.” Then Jesus spoke to the corpse: “Young man, I tell you, arise!” The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus brought him to his mother. Everyone was astonished. They glorified God saying, “A great prophet is standing among us!” and “God has visited his people!” The news of this incident spread throughout the whole province of Judea and the surrounding countryside. Lk. 7:11-17

John the Baptist had been critical of Herod Philip who had married his sister-in-law, Herodias. John had told Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have her as your wife.” Herod then arrested John and put him in prison. He wanted to put John to death, but he feared the people because they believed John to be a prophet. Mt. 14:3-5

In prison, John the Baptist heard of the deeds of Jesus, and he sent his disciples to ask, “Are you the Christ who is to come, or shall we continue looking for another?” Jesus told John’s disciples, “Go and tell John what you hear and see. The blind receive their sight and the lame walk. The lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear. The dead are raised up, and the poor have the good news preached to them. Blessed is the person who takes no offense at me.” Mt. 11:2-6

When John’s disciples went to tell John, Jesus spoke to the crowds concerning John. He said, “When you heard about John’s teachings, what did you expect Mt. 11:7-10

when you went out into the wilderness looking for him? Did you expect a reed shaken by the wind? Did you expect a man clothed in a rich wardrobe? Expensive wardrobes are reserved for king's palaces! Did you go out looking for a prophet? Let me tell you, John is more than a prophet. He is the one of whom it is written in the scriptures: 'Behold, I am sending my messenger before you, and he will prepare the way before you.'

Mt. 11:11-15 "Truly, I tell you, no human being is greater than John the Baptist. Yet the person who is the least significant in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John. Since John first mentioned the coming of the Messiah who would establish the kingdom of heaven, all kinds of people have tried to storm their way into the kingdom of heaven. Until John appeared, all the Old Testament prophesied of the coming of this kingdom. If you are willing to accept it, John is the Elijah who is to come. He who has ears willing to hear, let him listen.

Mt. 11:16-19 "To what shall I compare the people of this generation? What are they really like? They are like children sitting in the market place and calling to one another, 'We played one game and you would not play with us. So we played another game and you would not play that game either.' John the Baptist did not attend social functions, and people said of him, 'He has a demon.' I have attended many social functions, and people say of me, 'Behold, he is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet I tell you, the wisdom of both courses of action has been proven by the results."

Lk. 7:36-50 Jesus was invited to attend a social event at the home of a Pharisee who had been listening to Jesus as he taught. When it was learned that Jesus was attending this function, a prostitute came to the Pharisee's home to see Jesus. She brought an alabaster vial of ointment with

her. Jesus was reclining at the table, and the woman stood behind him at his feet, weeping. She washed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. Then she kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. The host was angry. He thought to himself, "If this man really was a prophet, he would know what kind of woman this is." Jesus knew what was in the Pharisee's mind, and he said, "I have something to say to you. A certain creditor had two debtors. One owed him eighty dollars and the other eight dollars. When neither of them could pay, he canceled the debts of both. Which of the two, do you think, will love him the more?" The Pharisee answered, "The one, I suppose, to whom he forgave more." Jesus said, "You have judged rightly." Then motioning toward the woman, Jesus said to the Pharisee, "Do you see this woman? When I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet. But she has washed my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss when I arrived, but from the time she entered she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins which are many, are forgiven her, for she has loved much. But he who is forgiven little loves little." Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you. Go in peace." Hearing this, the other guests began to murmur among themselves, "Who is this man, that he even forgives sins?"

Jesus went on a preaching tour through various cities and villages, bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve apostles accompanied him, and a number of women followed along to minister to their needs. Some of the women had been healed of infirmities and some had been delivered of evil spirits. Among them were Mary from Magdala, from whom seven demons

Lk. 8:1-3

had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of one of Herod's stewards, and Susanna, and many others.

Mk. 3:19b-30

In one community where Jesus was well-known, he stayed at a friend's home. Such a large crowd gathered, they could not even eat their meal. Some of his friends tried to rescue him, for they said, "He is beside himself." But some scribes who had come down from Jerusalem said, "The trouble with him is that he is possessed by Satan, and it is by his power that he casts out the demons." Jesus defended himself by saying, "How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot survive. If Satan is contending against himself, then he is divided and he cannot survive. I am not an ally of Satan, but a contender against him. For no one can enter a strong man's domain and plunder his goods unless he first binds that strong man. Then and only then can he plunder his domain. Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven all their sins and all of their blasphemies, except their blasphemies against the Holy Spirit. Those who show contempt against the Holy Spirit will be guilty of an eternal sin." This he said for the benefit of the scribes who had said he had an unclean spirit.

Mt. 12:46-50

While Jesus was still speaking to the people in the house, his mother and brothers gathered with the crowd outside. A man was sent with a message to Jesus, saying that his mother and brothers wanted to speak to him. Jesus told the man, "Who is my mother and who are my brothers?" Then stretching out his hand toward his disciples he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother, and my sister, and my mother."

Mt. 13:1-9

Jesus went down beside the Sea of Galilee, and great crowds gathered around him. Jesus got into a boat just off shore and taught them in parables while the crowd

stood on the beach. Jesus said, "A farmer went out to plant grain. Some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where the soil was thin. The grain sprang up quickly, but when the sun rose, the plants soon withered away because they had no roots. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns choked them out. Still other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who is able to hear, let him listen to what I am saying."

Later the disciples asked Jesus what this parable meant. Jesus said, "To you who are interested in learning the secrets of the kingdom of God, these things will be revealed, but for those who are not interested, these truths remain in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. Now the meaning of the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. The seeds along the path represent those who have heard the good news. The devil then comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so they will not believe and be saved. The seeds on rocky soil are those who hear the word joyfully, but have no root. They believe for a short while, and in time of temptation they fall away. The seeds that fall among thorns are those who hear, but as they go on their way, are choked by the cares and pleasures of this life. Their faith does not mature. And the seeds that fall in good soil are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth the fruit of their faith.

Lk. 8:9-15

"If you are interested, there is nothing hidden that shall not be made known to you, nor anything secret that shall not come to light. Pay attention, then, how you listen. Whoever has understanding will be given more truths. Those who are not interested in eternal matters will have taken from them even what they think they have."

Lk. 8:17-18

Jesus spoke another parable, saying, "The kingdom

Mt. 13:24-30

of heaven may be compared to a man who planted good seed in his field. But during the night his enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat. When the grain matured, the weeds became more apparent. The field hand asked the farmer, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Why are there so many weeds?' The farmer replied, 'An enemy has done this.' The field hand said, 'Shall we go out and pull out the weeds?' The farmer replied, 'No, for when you pull out the weeds you will uproot some of the wheat also. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will instruct the reapers to gather the weeds first, binding them into bundles to be burned. Then they can gather the wheat into my barn.' "

Mt. 13:36-43

Jesus left the crowd and returned to the house where he was staying. His disciples came to him, and asked, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds." Jesus answered, "I am the one who sows the good seed, and the field is the world. The good seed represents the children of the kingdom, and the weeds represent the children of the evil one. The enemy who sowed the weeds is the devil. The harvest is the close of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the close of the age when I send my angels to remove from my kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers to be destroyed in the furnace of fire where men will weep and grind their teeth. At that time the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of the heavenly Father. He who is able to hear, let him listen."

Mk. 4:26-29

Jesus said, "The kingdom of God can be compared to a farmer who scatters seed on the ground. Without his doing anything more to it, the seed sprouts. First it produces a blade, then the awn, and finally the ripe grain. The farmer doesn't do anything to make the seed pro-

duce. The earth produces of itself. When the farmer sees that the grain is ripe, he harvests it.

“What other parable shall we use to describe the kingdom of God? It is like a tiny mustard seed which is planted. It is one of the smallest of all seeds, and yet when it grows up it becomes one of the largest shrubs. Even the birds build their nests in them. Mk. 4:30-32

“The kingdom of God is like yeast which a woman adds to her bread dough. Soon the yeast permeates all the dough, and the bread rises.” Mt. 13:33

Jesus used many parables when he taught the people, and he explained them all to his disciples privately. Mk. 4:33-34

Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven is like buried treasure which a man discovers in a field unexpectedly. Joyfully he sells all he has and buys that field. Mt. 13:44

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant who is searching for fine pearls. He finds an exceptional pearl of great value, and he sells everything he has in order to buy it. Mt. 13:45-46

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a fishing net thrown into the sea. It gathers fish of every kind. Then it is pulled ashore and the fish are sorted. The good are saved, and the bad are discarded. So will it be at the end of the age. The angels will separate the evil ones from the righteous ones. The righteous will be saved, but the evil ones will be thrown into the furnace of fire where men will weep and grind their teeth.” Mt. 13:47-50

Jesus asked his disciples, “Have you understood all these things?” They replied, “Yes, Lord.” Then Jesus said, “Every teacher of God’s word is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.” Mt. 13:51-52

One day Jesus and his disciples boarded a boat to sail across the Sea of Galilee. On the journey, Jesus fell Mt. 8:18, 23-27

asleep. A violent storm suddenly swept across the lake, spilling water into the boat, and frightening the disciples. They woke Jesus, shouting, "Master, we are sinking!" Jesus got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waves. They calmed immediately. Jesus asked the disciples, "Where is your faith?" They respected him, yet feared him. They murmured among themselves, "What kind of a man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

Mk. 5:1-13

They landed at Gerasa, across the lake from Capernaum. When Jesus got out of the boat, he was met by a demon-possessed man, who lived among the tombs. He had often been bound with ropes and chains, but he broke the ropes in pieces, and the chains he wrenched apart. No one could tie him up anymore, because no one could overpower him. He ran like a crazy man among the tombs and the mountains, making wild cries and screams, and slashing and bruising himself with stones. When he saw Jesus coming toward him, he ran to him and fell at his feet. Jesus spoke to the demons inside the man, saying, "Come out of him, you unclean spirit!" The demon shrieked loudly, and screamed, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you by God, do not torment me." Jesus asked the demon, "What is your name?" He replied, "My name is Legion, for we are many." Then the demon pleaded with Jesus not to send them out of the country. On a nearby hillside was a large herd of pigs feeding, and the demons begged Jesus, "Let us enter into the pigs." Jesus permitted them to do so, and the evil spirits came out of the man and entered into the pigs. The herd of pigs, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea and were drowned.

Mk. 5:14-20

The pig herders ran to the city and throughout the

countryside telling everyone what had happened. Soon the people came in droves to Jesus. They also saw the man who had been demented now fully dressed and in his right mind. The people were frightened when eyewitnesses told what had happened, and they began to plead with Jesus to leave their area. As Jesus and his disciples were getting back into the boat, the man who had been demented begged Jesus that he might go along with them. Jesus refused him, saying, "Go home to your friends. Tell them what the Lord has done for you, and how he has shown mercy on you." The formerly demented man went into the Ten Greek Cities and proclaimed to everyone what Jesus had done for him; and everyone marveled.

When Jesus and the disciples returned to Capernaum, a crowd was waiting for him, and they welcomed him. Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, came and prostrated himself at Jesus' feet, begging him to come to his house. His only daughter, twelve years old, was dying. Lk. 8:40-42a

Jesus went immediately, and the people followed close behind him. A woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years and could not be healed by anyone, came up behind Jesus and touched the fringe of his garment. Immediately her hemorrhage stopped. Jesus turned around and asked, "Who touched me?" No one admitted doing it. Peter said, "Master, you are surrounded by people who are all pressing upon you!" But Jesus said, "Someone touched me. I felt power go out of me." The woman was frightened, and she fell down in front of Jesus, declaring publicly why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. Jesus said, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace." Lk. 8:42b-48

While Jesus was still speaking to the woman, a servant Lk. 8:49-56

from the ruler's house came and told Jairus, "Your daughter is dead. You don't need the teacher anymore." Hearing this, Jesus told Jairus, "Have no fear! Only believe, and she will be well." When they arrived at the home, Jesus did not permit the crowd to enter with him. Only Peter, John, and James, and the father and mother of the girl were permitted to remain. Everyone was weeping and mourning, but Jesus said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping." The people mocked Jesus because they knew the girl was dead. Jesus took the girl by the hand, saying, "Child, arise." The girl's spirit returned, and she got up at once. Jesus directed that something should be given her to eat. Her parents were awestricken, but Jesus charged them to tell no one what had happened.

Mt. 9:27-31 Jesus moved on from there to another community, and among the crowd that followed him were two blind men. When Jesus arrived at the home where he was going to stay, the blind men came to him, saying, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." Jesus asked, "Do you believe that I am able to heal you?" They answered, "Yes, Lord." Then Jesus touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." Immediately they received their sight, and Jesus sternly charged them, "See that no one knows about this." But the men went away and spread his fame throughout all that district.

Mt. 9:32-34 Then a man who was oppressed by a demon of speechlessness was brought to Jesus. And when Jesus cast out the demon, the dumb man spoke. The crowds marveled, saying, "Never was anything like this seen in Israel." But the Pharisees muttered, "He casts out demons by the power of Satan, the prince of demons."

Mk. 6:1-6 From there Jesus and his disciples went to Nazareth, Jesus' hometown. On the sabbath, Jesus taught in the synagogue, and everyone who heard him was astonished.

They asked, "Where did this man get all this teaching? Where did he get this wisdom? What miracles he performs! Isn't he the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James and Joseph and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" They took offense at Jesus, and Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own family." Jesus laid his hands upon a few sick people and healed them, but he could do no mighty miracles there, because of their unbelief.

## PART IV

# *Jesus Sends the Apostles Out and Continues His Ministry*

MT. 9:35-38      JESUS went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity. He had compassion for the crowds that followed him because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. To his disciples he said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Pray the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest."

MK. 6:7-11      Jesus called his twelve disciples together and gave them authority over evil spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every infirmity. Jesus instructed them, "Take nothing for your journey, no extra food, clothing or money. In each community choose the home where you will stay, and remain there until you depart that community. If any community will not receive you, shake the dust off your feet as you leave that community as a testimony against them."

“I am sending you out as sheep into the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Watch out for evil men. You will be condemned before councils, and flogged in their synagogues, and you will be brought before governors and kings for my sake. Use every opportunity to bear testimony before the Jews and the Gentiles. On such occasions don’t be concerned about what you shall say. Whatever you are to speak will be given to you in that hour by the Spirit of your heavenly Father speaking through you. There will be times when brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child, and children will rise up against their parents and have them put to death. Everyone will hate you because of your belief in me, but whoever endures to the end will be saved. When you are persecuted in one town, go to the next. Truly I tell you, I will come again before you have gone through all the towns of Israel.

Mt. 10:16-23

“A disciple is not greater than his teacher, nor is a servant greater than his master. The disciple will be treated like his teacher, and the servant will be treated like his master. I am the master of this household, and if people call me Satan, how much more will they say evil things about you.

Mt. 10:24-25

“Have no fear of those who threaten you. In only a matter of time their secret plots will become known by everyone. What I teach you during the nighttime, you teach during the daylight, and what I teach to you secretly, you proclaim from the housetops. Have no fear of those who can only kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Fear only him who can destroy both your soul and body in hell. Can you not buy two sparrows for sixteen cents? Yet not a single sparrow can alight on the ground without your Father knowing it. Even the hairs of your head are numbered. Have no fear of anyone then,

Mt. 10:26-33

for you are of more value than many sparrows. Everyone who testifies of me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

Mt. 10:34-39     “Don’t think that I have come to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. Because of belief in me, a son will be set against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A person’s enemies will often be in his own household. Whoever loves father and mother more than me is not worthy of me. Neither is anyone worthy of me if he will not take up his cross and follow me. Whoever hangs on to his life will lose it, and whoever offers his life willingly for my sake will find it.

Mt. 10:40-42     “Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the heavenly Father who sent me. Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward, and whoever receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man shall receive a righteous man’s reward. Whoever gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is my disciple, shall truly receive his reward.”

Lk. 9:6     When Jesus finished instructing his twelve apostles, they departed and went through the villages preaching the good news and healing everyone.

Mt. 14:1-13a     By this time Herod Philip had heard a great deal about Jesus. One day he said to his servants, “This must be John the Baptist. He must have been raised from the dead, and that is why these powers are at work in him.” Although Herod had arrested John and put him in prison, he had been afraid to put John to death. But on Herod’s birthday, Salome, the daughter of Herodias, danced before the company, and pleased Herod, so that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she wanted.

Prompted by her mother, Salome said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist on a platter." The king was reluctant to give her this wish, but since he had made an oath before his guests, he granted it. He had John's head brought on a platter and presented to Salome, and she, in turn, gave it to her mother. After John's disciples had buried John's body, they went and told Jesus. Hearing this sad news, Jesus withdrew in a boat to a lonely place apart.

The apostles returned from their missionary ventures throughout the countryside, and they told Jesus everything that they had done and taught. Jesus said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a lonely place and rest awhile." Jesus and his apostles withdrew to a place near Bethsaida. People soon learned where they were, and they followed after them. Jesus welcomed the people and spoke to them of the kingdom of God. He healed everyone of their diseases. Late in the afternoon the apostles came to Jesus and said, "Send the people away so they can find lodging and provisions. We cannot accommodate them in this lonely place." Jesus said, "Why don't you feed them?" They answered, "We have only five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy enough food to feed these people." There were about five thousand people, and Jesus told his disciples, "Have the people sit down in groups of about fifty." Then Jesus took the five loaves and two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them and broke them and had the disciples set the food before the group. After everyone had eaten his fill, the apostles collected twelve baskets of leftovers.

Mk. 6:30-32  
Lk. 9:11b-17

Then Jesus instructed his disciples to take the boat to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, while he dismissed the crowd. As the sun was setting, the boat was out on the sea, and Jesus was alone on the land. He could see

Mk. 6:45-52

the apostles were having trouble rowing, for the wind was against them. Then Jesus went into the hills to pray. Just before dawn, Jesus came to the apostles, walking on the sea. He meant to pass them by, but when they saw him walking on the water they thought he was a ghost, and they were all terrified. He spoke to them and said, "Don't be afraid. It is truly I." As soon as Jesus got into the boat, the wind stopped. The apostles were completely amazed, but they were still puzzled about the loaves. They couldn't understand it.

Mk. 6:53-56     The apostles landed the boat along the plain of Gennesaret, south of Capernaum. As soon as they landed, the people recognized Jesus, and ran throughout the whole neighborhood to bring all the sick people to Jesus. This happened wherever he went, in villages, cities, or countrysides. The sick and infirm requested time and again permission to touch even the fringe of his garment, and whoever touched it was made well.

Jn. 6:25-34     When some of the people who had been fed on the other side of the lake now found Jesus on this side, they were surprised. They asked, "Teacher, when did you come here?" Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, you were looking for me, not because you saw miracles, but because you ate your fill. Labor not for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life. That is the food that I want to give to you, for the heavenly Father has set his seal upon me." The people said to Jesus, "What does God want us to do?" Jesus replied, "God wants you to believe in the one whom he has sent." Then they asked Jesus, "Show us another miracle, then, so that we may believe in you. What miracle can you perform? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, as it is written in the scriptures, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, it was not Moses who gave them the bread from heaven. It was the same heavenly Father that now offers

you the true bread from heaven. For the true bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives eternal life to all who believe." The people said, "Lord, give us this bread always."

Jesus said, "I am the true bread of life; he who comes to me and believes in me shall never hunger or thirst. You have seen me and yet you do not believe in me. Everyone that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will not cast out. I came down from heaven, not to do my own will, but to do the will of the heavenly Father who sent me. And this is the will of the heavenly Father, that I should lose none of those he has given me, and that everyone who sees and believes in Jesus Christ shall have eternal life, and on the last day I will raise them up." Jn. 6:35-40

The Jews were murmuring against Jesus because he had said, "I am the bread of life which came down from heaven." They said, "Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" Jesus said, "Do not murmur among yourselves. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him to me, and I will raise him up at the last day. The prophets have written, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the heavenly Father comes to me. Only I have seen the heavenly Father, because I have come from him. Truly I say to you, he who believes in me has eternal life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. I am the bread of life which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh." Jn. 6:41-51

The Jews then disputed among themselves, saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus replied, "Truly I say to you, unless you eat my flesh, and Jn. 6:52-59

drink my blood, you have no eternal life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. My flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him. Just as the living heavenly Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. I am the living bread which came down from heaven, and whoever eats this bread will live forever." Jesus taught this to the Jews in the synagogue at Capernaum.

Jn. 6:60-65

Many of Jesus' disciples were distressed when they heard him speaking this way, and they said, "This is very difficult for us to understand." Jesus perceived within himself what his disciples were murmuring about, and he said to them, "Do you take offense at what I say? Then what if you were to see me ascending to where I was before? It is the spirit that gives life. The flesh amounts to nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But there are still some of you that do not believe." Jesus knew from the very first those who did not believe, and he knew who it was that would betray him. Jesus said, "No one can come to me unless it is granted him by the heavenly Father."

Jn. 6:66-71

After this many of the disciples drew away from Jesus and no longer followed after him. Jesus said to the twelve apostles, "Will you also go away?" Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Only you have the words of eternal life. We have come to know you and to believe in you. We know that you are the Holy One of God." Jesus replied, "Did I not choose the twelve of you, and one of you is a devil?" Jesus spoke of Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, for he was one of the twelve, and he was to betray Jesus.

Mt. 15:1-9

Pharisees and scribes came from Jerusalem to see Jesus, and asked him, "Why do your disciples violate

the Jewish traditions? They ignore the ceremonial ritual of washing their hands before they eat.” Jesus replied, “Why do you violate the commandments of God for the sake of your tradition? God commanded, ‘Honor your father and your mother.’ But you have a tradition that allows you to dedicate your whole estate to God. Then you ignore the needs of your parents by telling them that all your money has been given to God, and that you have no right to give God’s money away. You hypocrites! For the sake of your tradition, you have ignored God’s law. Well did Isaiah prophesy of you when he said: ‘This people say they honor me, but their heart is far from me. Their worship of me is meaningless, for they teach their man-made laws instead of mine.’”

Jesus gathered the people around him and said, “Try Mt. 15:10-20 to understand this: What makes a person unclean is not the food that goes into the mouth, but the speech that comes out of the mouth. For what you say reveals your innermost thoughts.” The disciples reported to Jesus that the Pharisees had been offended by what he had said. Jesus replied, “Every plant which has not been planted by my heavenly Father will be rooted up, so don’t be concerned about them. They are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into the ditch.” Peter said, “Please explain that parable to us.” Jesus said, “Don’t you understand yet? Can’t you see that whatever goes into your mouth passes into your stomach, and then passes on? But the speech that comes out of your mouth reveals your thinking, and this can defile a person. Out of a person’s innermost being come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, lies, and slander. These are the things that defile a person; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a person.”

From there Jesus went to the region of Tyre and Sidon, about fifty miles away. There he met a Canaanite Mt. 15:21-28

woman, a Syrophoenician by race, who cried out to him, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David. My daughter is demon-possessed." Jesus completely ignored the woman, and his disciples begged him, "Send her away, for she is crying after us now." Jesus told the woman, "I was sent only to help the Jews, the lost sheep of Israel." The woman knelt down before Jesus, and pleaded with him, "Lord, help me." Jesus replied, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs" (the Jews referred to themselves as children of God and to the Gentiles as dogs). The woman said, "Yes, Lord. Yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table." Then Jesus said, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

Mk. 7:31-36

From the region of Tyre, Jesus went through Sidon and then back to the Sea of Galilee, going through the region of the Ten Greek Cities. There a deaf-mute was brought to Jesus, and the people asked Jesus to lay his hands upon him. Taking the man aside privately, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he applied spittle from his own mouth to the tip of the man's tongue. Looking up to heaven, Jesus said, "Be opened!" The man's hearing and speech were restored, and he spoke plainly. Jesus told the people not to tell anyone about this. But the more he told them, the more zealously they proclaimed it.

Mt. 15:30-31

Mobs of people came to Jesus bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the speechless, and many others. Jesus healed them all. All the people were utterly amazed when they saw the speechless people speaking, the maimed become whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. They all glorified the God of Israel.

Mt. 15:32-39

Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "This crowd has been with me now for three days. I feel sorry for them

because they have nothing to eat. I don't want to send them to their homes hungry, for many of them will faint along the way." The disciples asked, "Where can we get enough food here in the desert to feed this great crowd?" Jesus asked, "How much food do you have?" They replied, "Seven loaves of bread and a few small fish." Jesus commanded the crowd to sit down. Then he took the bread and the fish, and gave thanks. Then Jesus distributed the food among the disciples and instructed them to feed the crowd. After everyone had eaten his fill, the disciples gathered seven baskets full of the leftovers. The crowd consisted of four thousand men, besides women and children. Then Jesus sent away the crowd, and he and his disciples went by boat to the region of Magadan.

At Magadan, Pharisees and Sadducees tried to put Jesus to a test by asking him to show them a sign from heaven. Jesus told them, "You know how to judge the weather by looking at the sky. You have a saying, 'Red sky in the evening means fair weather tomorrow; but red sky in the morning means a stormy day.' You know how to interpret the signs in the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times. This evil and adulterous generation asks for a special sign, but none shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah." Mt. 16:1-4a

Jesus and his disciples departed from there, and went across the sea to the region of Caesarea Philippi. When they arrived there, the disciples were concerned because they had forgotten to bring along food. Jesus told them, "Beware of the bread of the Pharisees and Sadducees." The disciples didn't understand the significance of what Jesus was saying, and Jesus said, "Where is your faith? Why are you worried about not having food? Won't you ever learn? Don't you remember the five loaves and the five thousand, and how many baskets of Mt. 16:4b-12

leftovers you gathered? Or the seven loaves and the four thousand, and how many baskets of leftovers you gathered then? Why can't you understand what I mean when I tell you to beware of the bread of the Pharisees and Sadducees?" Then they understood that Jesus was not speaking about food, but of the teachings of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

Mk. 8:22-26     At Bethsaida, some people brought a blind man to Jesus, and asked Jesus to lay hands on him. Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. Jesus applied spittle to the man's eyes and laid hands on him. Then he asked the man, "Now do you see anything?" The man looked around and said, "I see people. They look like trees walking." Jesus placed his hands over the man's eyes again, and his sight was fully restored. He saw everything clearly. Jesus told the man not to enter the village but to go directly to his home.

Lk. 9:18-20     One day, after Jesus and his disciples had been by themselves praying, Jesus asked them, "Who do people say that I am?" They answered, "Some say John the Baptist, others say you are Elijah, and still others say that one of the Old Testament prophets has arisen." Then Jesus asked, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ of God."

Lt. 16:17-18, 20     And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Peter! None other than my Heavenly Father has revealed this to you. On this rock-like confession of your faith I will build my church, and even the gates of hell will not be able to withstand its triumphant march." Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.

Mt. 16:21-23     From then on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the Jewish officials. He would be killed, and on the third day be raised. Peter rebuked Jesus for saying these things. Peter said, "God forbid, Lord! This shall never

happen to you!” But Jesus turned toward Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me! You are not on the side of God but on the side of men.”

Jesus said to the disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. Whoever tries to hang on to his life will lose it, but whoever gives up his life for my sake will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life in the process? When I return in my glory, I will be ashamed then of anyone who is ashamed now of me and my teachings. Truly I tell you, there are some of you standing here right now who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God.” Lk. 9:23-27

Six days later Jesus took Peter, James, and John to the top of a high mountain. There Jesus was transfigured before their very eyes. His face shone as bright as the sun, and his clothing became dazzling white. Moses and Elijah also appeared, and they talked with Jesus. Peter was flustered and said, “Lord, it is wonderful that we can be here. If you want me to, I will make shelters for you and Moses and Elijah.” Suddenly a brilliant cloud overshadowed them all, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him!” When the three disciples heard this, they fell on their faces, and were filled with fear. Jesus then came and touched them, saying, “Get up, and don’t be afraid.” When the disciples looked up, everything had disappeared, and only Jesus was there. Mt. 17:1-8

As they came down from the mountain, Jesus told the disciples, “Don’t tell anyone about this vision until I have risen from the dead.” The disciples asked, “Why do the scribes insist that Elijah must come before their Messiah appears?” Jesus replied, “The scriptures teach that Elijah is to come and prepare all things. But Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him. In- Mt. 17:9-13

stead, many mistreated him badly. In like manner, I shall also suffer at their hands." The disciples understood then that Jesus was referring to John the Baptist.

**Mt. 17:14-21** When Jesus and the three disciples returned to the waiting crowd, a man knelt before Jesus and said, "Lord, have mercy on my son. He suffers terribly from epilepsy. He sometimes falls into the water, and sometimes he falls into the fire. I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him." Jesus said to the disciples, "O faithless and stubborn people, how long am I to remain with you? How long can I bear with you? Bring the lad to me." Jesus rebuked the demon in the boy, and the demon left him. The boy was cured instantly. Afterward, the disciples came to Jesus privately, asking, "Why couldn't we cast it out?" Jesus replied, "Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you only have faith as insignificant as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move over there,' and it will move. If you have faith, nothing will be impossible to you."

**Mk. 9:30-32** Jesus and his disciples went into the province of Galilee. Jesus didn't want anyone to know where they were, for now he was teaching his apostles. He told them, "I will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill me. But three days later I will be raised from the dead." They didn't understand what he was saying, but they were afraid to ask him any questions.

**Mt. 17:24-27** At Capernaum, the collectors of the temple tax at the synagogue asked Peter, "Why doesn't your teacher pay the half-shekel tax?" Peter returned home to ask Jesus about the matter. But before Peter could even speak, Jesus said, "Here's a question for you, Peter. From whom do earthly kings receive tolls or tribute? From their own sons or from other people?" Peter replied, "From others, of course." Jesus said, "Then the sons

are free from paying tax. However, so as not to give offense, go cast a fishline into the sea. In the mouth of the first fish that you catch you will find a shekel. Take it and give it to the synagogue collectors, to pay the temple tax for me and for you."

One day the disciples asked Jesus, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus lifted a child up, and said, "Truly I tell you, unless you become like a little child, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives a child in my name receives me. And whoever causes a child who believes in me to sin, it would be better off having a large stone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Don't ever despise one of these little children! For I tell you, in heaven their angels always behold the face of our heavenly Father. If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go in search of the one that is lost? If he finds it, he rejoices over it more than the ninety-nine that never went astray. So also, it is the will of my heavenly Father that none of these little ones should ever perish.

Mt. 18:1-6.  
10-14

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Let me tell you also, if two of you agree on earth about

Mt. 18:15-20

anything you ask, it will be done for you by my heavenly Father. And wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in the midst of them."

Mt. 18:21-35

Peter asked Jesus, "Lord, how often should I be willing to forgive my brother when he sins against me? As many as seven times?" Jesus replied, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven. The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wanted to settle accounts with his debtors. One debtor was brought before him who owed him ten million dollars. When he could not pay the account, the king ordered him and his family and all his goods to be sold, and the money to be applied on the debt. But the debtor fell to his knees, begging the king, "Sir, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything I owe." Out of pity for the man, the king released him and canceled the debt. A short time later, that same man whose debt had been canceled, came upon a man who owed him twenty dollars. He grabbed the man by the throat and said, "Pay what you owe me." The man fell to his knees and begged him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you." Instead, the man put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When this matter was reported to the king, the king summoned the man whose enormous debt had been canceled. The king said to him, "You wicked man! I canceled your tremendous debt to me when you pleaded for mercy. Shouldn't you have shown the same mercy toward your fellowman?" In anger, the king delivered the man to the jailers till he should pay his enormous debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

Mk. 9:38-41

John said to him, "Teacher, we saw a man casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he was not following us." But Jesus said, "Do not forbid

him; for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon after to speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is for us. For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of cold water to drink because you bear the name of Christ, will by no means lose his reward."

Jesus remained in the province of Galilee. He avoided going into the province of Judea, because the Jews there wanted to kill him. But when the Jewish feast of Tabernacles was approaching, the brothers of Jesus coaxed him, saying, "Why don't you go over into Judea so your disciples there may see the miracles you do. No one works secretly if he wants his popularity to become known. If you are able to do these miracles, why don't you reveal yourself to the whole world?" Even his brothers did not believe that he was the Christ. Jesus said to them, "My time has not yet come, but your time is always here. The world cannot hate you because you are in accord with the world. But the world hates me because I testify that its works are evil. You go to the feast by yourselves. I am not planning to go to the feast, because my time has not yet fully come."

Jn. 7:1-9

After the brothers of Jesus had left to go to Jerusalem for the feast, Jesus went to the feast by himself. The Jewish authorities were looking for Jesus and asking everyone at the feast, "Where is he?" There was a great deal of controversy among the people concerning Jesus. Some said, "He is a good man." Others said, "No, he is leading the people astray." Since everyone feared the Jewish authorities, no one spoke openly about Jesus.

Jn. 7:10-13

At the height of the festival, Jesus went into the temple and taught. The Jews marveled at his teaching, saying, "How can this man have such a tremendous understanding when he has never studied?" Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. If any man chooses to do the heavenly Father's

Jn. 7:14-24

will, he shall know whether my teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own. If a person is seeking glory for himself, he says whatever he wants to say. But a person who is seeking only the glory of God can only speak the truth. Moses gave you the law, and yet none of you keep that law. Why do you seek to kill me?" The Jews answered, "You speak like you have a demon! Who is seeking to kill you?" Jesus replied, "I did one miracle on the sabbath, and you all marveled at it. Moses gave you circumcision (not that it was from Moses, but from the heavenly Father), and you circumcised a man on the sabbath. If it's right for a man to be circumcised on the sabbath, why are you angry with me because I healed a man on the sabbath? Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment."

Jn. 7:25-31 When the people saw Jesus teaching, they asked among themselves, "Isn't this the man whom they are trying to kill? Here he is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to him! Can it be that the Jewish authorities really think he is the Christ? We know the background of this man, but don't the scriptures teach that when the Christ comes no one will know where he comes from?" Jesus answered their questions as he taught in the temple, saying, "You know me, and you know where I come from? I have not come of my own accord. The God whom you know planned my coming. I came from God, and he was the one who sent me." The people wanted to arrest Jesus, but no one laid hands on him because his hour had not yet come. Yet many of the people believed in Jesus as the Messiah, saying, "When the Christ appears, will he do more miracles than this man has done?"

Jn. 7:32-36 The Pharisees heard the mutterings of the crowd, and the Jewish officials soon sent officers to arrest Jesus. Jesus said to them, "You can't arrest me yet. I will be around a little while longer before returning to him

who sent me. Then if you look for me you will not find me, because I will be where you cannot come.” The Jews asked one another, “Where does he intend to go that we shall not find him? Does he intend to go and live among the Jewish dispersion who live with the Greeks? What is he talking about when he says we will not be able to find him? What does he mean, we cannot go where he is?”

On the final day of the great feast, Jesus stood up in the temple and proclaimed, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scriptures have said, ‘Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.’” Now Jesus was referring to the Holy Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive. As yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus had not yet been glorified.

Jn. 7:37-39

There was a varied reaction among the people who listened to Jesus as he taught. Some said, “He is really a prophet.” Others said, “He is the Christ.” Still others said, “Is the Christ supposed to come from Galilee? Don’t the scriptures say that the Christ will be a descendant of King David, and come from Bethlehem, the place where David himself was born?” There was division among the people. Some believed in Jesus. Others wanted him arrested. But no one laid hands on him.

Jn. 7:40-44

When the officers returned to the Jewish authorities, they were asked, “Why did you not arrest this Jesus?” The officers replied, “No man ever taught like this man!” The Pharisees said, “Are you led astray by his teaching also? Do you see any of us believing in him? That many crowd listening to him doesn’t even know the law.” A Pharisee named Nicodemus, who had visited with Jesus privately, asked the authorities, “Does our law judge a man without first giving him an honest hearing and learning what he has to say for himself?” They replied, “Are

Jn. 7:45-52

you also from Galilee? Search the scriptures for yourself and you will see that nothing is said about any prophet coming from Galilee.”

Jn. 7:53-8:11

In the evening when everyone returned to their homes, Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early the next morning he returned to the temple, and the people came to listen to him. The Jewish authorities plotted to put Jesus to the test by bringing a woman who had been caught committing adultery. They brought her to Jesus, and said, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. According to the law of Moses we are commanded to stone her to death. What is your verdict concerning her?” Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger in the dust. Then he stood up and pronounced his verdict: “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” Then he bent down again and continued writing in the dust. When her accusers heard this, they left one by one, beginning with the eldest. Finally Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus asked her, “Woman, where are your accusers? Does no one condemn you?” She answered, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you. Go, and do not repeat your sin again.”

Jn. 8:12-19

Jesus continued to teach, saying, “I am God’s light in this world. Those who follow in this light will not walk in darkness, but will have the light leading them to eternal life.” The Pharisees interrupted, saying, “You are now bearing witness to yourself, and your testimony then is not true.” Jesus replied, “Even if I am bearing witness to myself, my testimony is true. I know the purpose of my coming, and I know where I am going. You do not know where I came from or where I am going. You judge according to man’s judgment, but I judge no one. Yet even if I were to judge, my judgment would be true. For I would not be judging alone, but

God would be judging with me. According to your law, if two men agree on an issue, their testimony is true. I bear witness to myself, and the heavenly Father also bears witness to me.” The Pharisees asked, “Where is your father?” Jesus replied, “You don’t know me or my Father. If you really knew who I am, you would know my Father also.”

Jesus continued to teach in the temple, saying, “I will soon go away, and where I am going, you cannot come. You will still be looking for someone else as the promised one of God, and you will die in your sins while you continue to look.” The Jews asked, “Will he kill himself, since he speaks this way about going somewhere where we cannot come?” Jesus replied, “You belong to this world. I do not belong to this world. I said you would die in your sins because that is your fate, unless you believe that I am the Christ.” They asked, “Who are you really?” Jesus replied, “I am the Christ, just as I have told you from the beginning. There are many things that I could teach you, and there are many things that I can condemn you for. For I declare to the world the truth which I have heard from the One who sent me.” The people did not understand that Jesus was speaking to them of the heavenly Father. So Jesus said, “When you have lifted me up, then you will know that I am the Christ, and that I have done nothing of my own authority. I have spoken only as the heavenly Father has taught me. For the heavenly Father is the one who sent me, and he is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do what is pleasing to him.”

Jn. 8:21-29

By this time many of the Jews believed in Jesus. To those who believed in him, Jesus said, “You will be my disciples if you continue in my teaching. You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.” They asked, “What do you mean by saying that we will be made free?”

Jn. 8:30-38

We are descendants of Abraham, and have never been slaves to anyone.” Jesus replied, “Truly I tell you, whoever commits sin is a slave to sin. A slave does not remain in the master’s house forever. Only the son remains forever. So if that Son makes you free, you will be free indeed. I know you are descendants of Abraham. Yet some of you seek to kill me because you do not want to accept my message. I speak of what I have seen with my Father. You obey what you have been taught from your father.”

Jn. 8:39-47

The Jews said, “Abraham is our father.” Jesus answered, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do what Abraham did. Some of you are seeking to kill me, and all I have done is to tell you the truth which I heard from God. This is not what Abraham would have done. No, you are doing what your real father did.” The Jews were incensed, and said, “We were not born of fornication. We have only one Father, even God.” Jesus replied, “If God were truly your Father, you would love me, for I have come from God. My coming wasn’t of my doing, but he sent me. Why can’t you understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth because there is no truth in him. He tells lies because this is according to his nature. He is a liar and the father of all lies. But since I tell the truth you will not believe me. Which of you can convict me of sin? If I am telling the truth, why can you not believe me? A child of God willingly hears the words of God. Since you do not want to hear God’s words that proves that you are not God’s children.”

Jn. 8:48-59

The Jewish officials sneered at Jesus, “You are a Samaritan scoundrel! You have a demon!” Jesus re-

plied, "I do not have a demon. I honor my heavenly Father, and you dishonor me. I do not desire any glory for myself, but the heavenly Father seeks it for me. Truly I tell you, whoever obeys my teachings will never see death." The Jewish officials shouted, "Now we know you have a demon! Abraham died and so did the prophets! Now you say, if anyone obeys your teachings he will never see death. Are you greater than our father Abraham who died? Are you greater than the prophets who died? Who do you think you are anyway?" Jesus answered, "I do not make these claims for any glory for myself. It is my heavenly Father, whom you claim to be your God, who makes these claims for me. I know the heavenly Father, but you do not know him. If I were to say I do not know him, I would be a liar like you. But I do know him and I obey him. Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day. He knew that I would come, and he was glad." The Jewish officials said, "You're not even fifty years old! Yet you claim to have seen Abraham?" Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, I existed even before Abraham was born." The Jewish officials went to get stones to throw at him, but he hid himself and escaped out of the temple.

As Jesus and his disciples were walking along, they met a man blind from birth. The disciples asked Jesus, "Teacher, why was this man born blind? Was it because of his sins or because of his parents' sins?" Jesus replied, "It was neither this man's sins nor his parents'. He was born blind to demonstrate the power of God. We must demonstrate that power of God while we still have time. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Jesus then made clay out of some earth and spittle and anointed the man's eyes with the clay. Then Jesus instructed the blind man, "Go and wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). The blind man returned

Jn. 9:1-12

seeing. The man's neighbors and those who knew him as a beggar, asked one another, "Isn't this the man who used to sit and beg?" Others said, "That's the same man." Still others said, "No, but he certainly looks like him." When the man insisted that he was the same man, people asked him, "Then how did you receive your sight?" He replied, "The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes. Then he instructed me to go to Siloam and wash. After I washed, I received my sight." When the people asked him where Jesus was, the man replied, "I do not know."

Jn. 9:13-17

It was a sabbath day when Jesus made the clay and healed the blind man. So people brought the man to the Pharisees. The Pharisees wanted to know how he had received his sight, and he told them, "The man put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees insisted, "This man cannot be from God, for he does not keep the sabbath." Others said, "How can a sinner do such miracles?" There was a division between them. They turned to the man who had formerly been blind, and asked, "What is your opinion about this man, since he has healed your sight?" The man replied, "That man is a prophet."

Jn. 9:18-23

The Jewish officials refused to believe that the man had been blind and now could see. They sent for the man's parents, and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How is it he now can see?" His parents said, "Yes, definitely, this is our son that was born blind. But we do not know who cured him or how it was done. Why not ask him? He is old enough to speak for himself." The parents were afraid to say anything more. For the Jewish officials had already announced that if anyone should declare that Jesus was the Christ, he would be excommunicated from the synagogue.

The Jewish officials requested that the man appear again, who had formerly been blind, and said to him, "Give the praise to God, and not to Jesus, for he is a sinner." The man answered, "Whether the man is a sinner or not, I do not know. I only know one thing, though I was born blind, now I see." The officials asked again, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" The man replied, "I have already told you once, and you would not believe me. Why do you want to hear it again? Are you interested in becoming his disciples too?" This angered the officials, and they said, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses, but we don't know anything about this man Jesus." The man said, "That certainly seems strange! You don't know anything about this man Jesus, and yet he cured my blindness. We know that God doesn't listen to sinners. God only listens to those who worship and obey him. Ever since the world began it has not been recorded that sight has been restored to a man born blind. If this man Jesus were not from God, he could do nothing by himself." The Jewish officials sneered, saying, "You were born in utter sin, and now you are trying to teach us!" Then they threw him out.

Jn. 9:24-34

Jesus found the man again. After hearing how he had been treated by the Jewish officials, Jesus said to him, "Do you believe in the Christ?" He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him. He is the one standing before you right now speaking to you." The man said, "Lord, I believe!" The man bowed down and worshiped Jesus. Jesus told him, "I came into the world to give sight to those who were spiritually blind, and to tell those who think they have spiritual sight that they are really blind." Some of the Pharisees overheard what Jesus said, and they asked him, "Do you think we are blind?" Jesus

Jn. 9:35-41

replied, "If you had admitted that you were spiritually blind, you would have no guilt. But since you claim to have spiritual sight, your guilt remains.

Jn. 10:1-6

"Truly I tell you, anyone who insists on entering the sheep pen by climbing over the fence instead of entering through the gate, can only be a thief! The shepherd of the sheep enters through the gate. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out, and the sheep obey his voice. He leads his sheep, and the sheep follow after him, for they trust his voice. They do not recognize the voice of strangers, and they will run away from them." The Pharisees did not understand the figure that Jesus was speaking to them.

Jn. 10:7-18

Jesus spoke to them in another figure, saying, "Truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All others who came before me are thieves, and the true sheep did not pay attention to them. I am the gate. Those who enter through me will be saved, and will go in and out and find good pasture. The thief intends only to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose in coming is that they may have life in all fullness. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. A shepherd who is hired does not own the sheep. When he sees a wolf approaching, he deserts the sheep and runs to save his own life, and the wolf tears into the flock and scatters the sheep. A hired shepherd isn't concerned about the sheep, but I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, even as my heavenly Father knows me and I know the Father. I lay down my life for the sheep. I also have other sheep in another fold. I must bring them in also, and they will obey my voice. Then there will be one flock and one shepherd. The Father loves me, because I am willing to lay down my life that I may receive it again. No one is taking my life from me. I lay it down of my own accord. I have the

power to lay it down, and I have the power to take it back again. I have received this power from my heavenly Father."

Again there was obvious division among the Jews because of the teaching of Jesus. Many said, "Why should we listen to him anymore? He has a demon! He is out of his mind!" Others said, "He doesn't sound like a man who has a demon. And, after all, how can a demon open the eyes of a blind man?" Jn. 10:19-21

During the feast of the Dedication which was held in Jerusalem in the winter, Jesus taught in the temple, in the area of Solomon's porch. The Jewish authorities gathered around him, and asked, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you really are the Christ, why not come right out and tell us so?" Jesus replied, "I have told you, and you would not believe me. The miracles that I do in my Father's name bear witness to the fact that I am the Christ. You refuse to believe in me. You are not numbered among my sheep. I know my sheep, and my sheep know me and follow me. My sheep will never be destroyed, for I give them eternal life. My heavenly Father has given them to me, and no one can steal them away from me. He is the supreme power over all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one." Jn. 10:22-30

Again the Jewish officials gathered stones to throw at Jesus. Jesus said, "I have demonstrated many miracles from the heavenly Father; for which of these miracles do you now stone me?" The officials replied, "We are not stoning you because of the miracles but because of your blasphemy. You're a human being, and yet you have made yourself equal with God." Jesus said, "Isn't it recorded in the scriptures that men are gods? (Ps. 82:6). The Hebrew judges are called 'sons of the Most High.' If the Psalmist referred to those to whom the word of Jn. 10:31-38

God came as being sons of God—and you know the scriptures cannot be wrong—how can you say that I am blaspheming when I refer to myself as the Son of God? It was the Father himself who consecrated and sent me into the world. Don't believe in me unless I am doing the miracles of the Father. But even if you can't believe in me, believe in the miracles, so that you will recognize that the Father is in me, and I am in the Father."

Jn. 10:39-42      Again the Jewish officials tried to arrest Jesus, but he eluded them. Jesus found refuge at Bethany, beyond the Jordan, where John the Baptist first ministered. Many people came to Jesus there, and they said, "John did no miracles, but everything that he said about this man is true." Many of the people who listened to Jesus in Bethany believed in him.

## PART V

# *Jesus Completes His Ministry*

WHEN the time drew near for Jesus to return to heaven, he unhesitatingly moved toward the events that awaited him at Jerusalem. He sent James and John on ahead of him into a Samaritan village to find lodging, but when the people learned that Jesus intended to go on to Jerusalem, they would not accept him as their guest. When James and John reported this to Jesus, they asked him, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" Jesus rebuked them for this attitude, and they went on to another village. Lk. 9:51-56

Along the way, someone said to Jesus, "I will follow you wherever you go." To him Jesus said, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but I have nowhere to lay my head." To someone else Jesus said, "Follow me." But the man replied, "Lord, I will follow you as soon as my aged father has died." To him Jesus said, "Let those who are not concerned about spiritual matters deal with things like that. Your duty is to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God." Someone Lk. 9:57-62

else said, "I will follow you, Lord, but first I want to say good-bye to my family at home." To him Jesus said, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Lk. 10:1-12 Jesus appointed seventy of his followers, and sent them in pairs ahead of him into every town and village where he himself was about to come. He reminded them, saying, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Pray the Lord of the harvest to send more workers into his harvest. I am sending you out as lambs into the midst of wolves, as you go on your way. Carry no extra baggage, and do not stop to visit with anyone along the way. Whenever you enter a house, speak a word of blessing. If the people are receptive, your peace shall rest upon them, but if not, it shall return to you. When you arrive in a village, don't go from house to house looking for the best accommodations, but take the first lodging available to you, eating and drinking whatever they provide. Don't refuse their hospitality, for the laborer deserves his wages. Wherever villagers receive you, heal the sick and tell them, 'The kingdom of God is very near to you.' If a village does not receive you, go into its streets and say, 'We wipe the dust of your town off our feet as a witness against you, but remember this, the kingdom of God has come very near to you.' I tell you, in the day of judgment, Sodom will be better off than that town!"

Lk. 10:16 "Those who will listen to you will listen to me, and those who reject you will reject me. And whoever rejects me, rejects the God who sent me."

Mt. 11:20-24 Then Jesus began to denounce the cities where most of his miracles had been performed and yet the people had not repented. "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles I performed in your cities had been performed in the wicked cities of Tyre and

Sidon, those people would have repented. Let me tell you, the people of Tyre and Sidon will be better off on the day of judgment than will you. And you people of Capernaum! You will not be praised by heaven, either! You shall be delivered to hell. For if the miracles which were done in you had been performed in Sodom, it would still be in existence today. Let me tell you, the people of Sodom will be better off on the judgment day than you will be."

Later the seventy returned, and joyously exclaimed, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!" Jesus replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority over all the power of the evil one. You shall walk on serpents and scorpions, and nothing shall hurt you. But don't rejoice in the fact that the demons are subject to you, but rejoice in the fact that your names are written in heaven."

Then Jesus was filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit, and he said, "I praise you, heavenly Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have graciously hidden these things from those who are wise and knowledgeable according to worldly standards and have revealed them to those who are trusting as little children. According to your will all things have been delivered to me by you, heavenly Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, or who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

Turning to the twelve apostles, Jesus said privately, "How privileged you are to see these things! There have been many prophets and kings who have longed to see and hear these things, but they were not privileged like you are.

"Come unto me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and

you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

1 k. 10:25-28 One day a man who was an expert in the religious teachings of the law of Moses tried to put Jesus on the spot by asking, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus replied, "You know what is written in the law of Moses. How would you answer that question?" The man replied, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind; and you shall love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus said, "That is correct. Do that and you will live."

1 k. 10:29-37 But desiring to justify himself, the man asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A certain man was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho when he was attacked by robbers. They took his clothing and money and beat him, and left him half dead. Before long, a priest came down that same road. When he saw the man lying by the side of the road, he passed by on the other side. Soon afterward, a Levite, an assistant in the temple, came by and saw the man lying there, too. He also passed by on the other side of the road. Then a Samaritan, one of the people the Jews despise, came along that road and saw the man. He had compassion for him and ministered to his needs. He put medicine and bandages on his wounds. Then he brought the man to an inn and took care of him until he was well enough to care for himself. When the Samaritan paid the room rent he gave the innkeeper some extra money saying, 'Take care of the man. If it costs more than this, I will repay you when I return.' Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man who was robbed?" The man said, "The one who showed mercy on him." Jesus replied, "Go and do likewise."

1 k. 10:38-42 As Jesus and his disciples continued their journey,

they entered the village of Bethany, where Martha invited them into her house. Martha had a sister named Mary, who enjoyed sitting on the floor in front of Jesus, intently listening to his teaching whenever he came. Martha was perplexed with getting a meal ready for everyone, and finally she went to Jesus and asked, "Lord, does it seem fair to you that my sister has left me to fix the meal all by myself? Tell her to help me!" Jesus replied, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things because you think they are essential for my comfort. I prefer your company to your cooking. That is the only thing that is essential. Mary has chosen to provide that one need, and it shall not be denied her."

One time when Jesus had drawn apart from his disciples to pray, one of the disciples waited until Jesus was finished, and then asked, "Lord, please teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples to pray." Jesus instructed the disciples, "When you pray, speak to the Father something like this: 'Father, may your holy name always be held in high honor. May you be acknowledged as ruler over all. Keep providing our daily needs. Forgive us our sins, for we forgive those who have sinned against us. And do not allow us to be led into temptation.'"

Lk. 11:1-4

Then Jesus told the disciples, "Suppose you went to a friend's house in the middle of the night, and said to him, 'Please lend me three loaves of bread. A guest has arrived after a long journey, and I have nothing to feed him!' Perhaps your friend will holler out to you, 'Don't bother me at this hour! We're all in bed. I can't get up to give you anything now!' Truly I tell you, though your friend will not get up and give you anything simply because he is your friend, yet because of your persistence he will get up and give you whatever you need. There is a lesson here concerning prayer. Keep on asking and you

Lk. 11:5-13

will receive. Keep on seeking and you will find. Keep on knocking and the door will be opened for you. Everyone who continues to ask will receive. Everyone who continues to seek will find. And everyone who continues to knock will find the doors opened. Those of you who are fathers, think about this for a moment. If your son asks you for a fish, you wouldn't think of giving him a serpent instead. Or if your son asks you for an egg, you would never give him a scorpion instead. If evil people know how to give their children what they need, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him for it?"

l.k. 11:14-16      Once a mute was brought to Jesus, and when Jesus cast out the demon, the man was able to speak. Many of the people marveled at this. Others said, "He casts out demons by the power of Satan, the king of all demons!" Others tried to tempt Jesus into performing a miracle for them.

l.k. 11:17-20      Jesus knew what they were thinking, and said, "Every kingdom divided by civil strife will be destroyed, just as a family that is divided by strife is doomed. If what you say is true, that I cast out demons through the power of Satan, then Satan's kingdom is divided and his kingdom will not last. Those of you who claim that I cast out demons by the power of Satan, let me ask you, by what power do your teachers cast out demons? Let them decide if your charges against me are correct. If I cast out demons by the power of God, then you must realize that the kingdom of God has arrived.

l.k. 11:21-23      "Satan is strong, and he guards his kingdom securely, but when someone who is stronger than Satan comes and overpowers him, Satan's fortress begins to crumble, and his power is dissipated. Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

l.k. 11:24-26      "When a demon leaves a person, he searches for an-

other dwelling place. When he finds none, he says to himself, 'I will return to the person from which I was cast out, and I will make my home with him once more.' When he returns, he finds the home swept and empty. Then he invites seven other demons, more wicked than himself, and they all make their dwelling there. So the last state of the person is worse than the first."

When Jesus had spoken these words, a woman in the crowd shouted to him, "God bless the mother who raised you!" Jesus replied, "More blessed are those who hear the words of God and obey them." Lk. 11:27-28

Ever larger crowds gathered around Jesus, and Jesus continued to teach, saying, "This generation is filled with evil people. They keep asking for a miracle to prove that I am the Christ. But no miracle shall be given to this generation of evil ones except the sign of Jonah. Just as Jonah was miraculously brought forth from the belly of a fish to complete his commission to the Ninevites, so will I be brought forth in similar fashion in this generation. Lk. 11:29-30

"At the day of judgment the Queen of Sheba shall condemn the people of this generation. She came on a very long journey in order to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and this generation has the opportunity to hear something even greater than the wisdom of Solomon. Lk. 11:31

"The people of Nineveh shall condemn this generation too. For they repented at the preaching of Jonah. But there is a greater one to preach to this generation." Lk. 11:32

One of the Pharisees in the crowd invited Jesus to come to his home to eat. The Pharisee was astonished to see that Jesus ignored the Jewish ritual of ceremonial washing before dinner. When he commented to Jesus about it, Jesus said, "You Pharisees make a fetish of cleansing your skin, while on the inside you are still full of evil and wickedness. How foolish can you be! Didn't God make the inside of you as well as the outside? If Lk. 11:37-41

you Pharisees would give more attention to purifying the inner man, you wouldn't have to worry so much about cleansing the outer man.

Lk. 11:42     “Woe to you Pharisees! You are more concerned about tithing on the vegetables you grow in your garden than you are about your greater obligations of showing justice to your fellowman and love for God. Certainly you should tithe, but you should not ignore these other things either.

Lk. 11:43-44     “Woe to you Pharisees! You covet the front seats in the synagogues which are reserved for the most important members! And you pride yourselves over the attention and the preferential treatment that you receive in public places! You believe that any contact with a corpse or a grave defiles you, but let me tell you, you Pharisees are like graves that are hidden out in the fields. Everyone who walks by you defiles themselves without knowing it.”

Lk. 11:45-52     An expert in the law of Moses said to Jesus, “Teacher, you have insulted my profession in what you say.” Jesus replied, “Yes, woe to you experts in the law also! You put burdens on men that are too heavy for them to bear. You wouldn't touch these same burdens with the tip of your finger. Woe to you! You build monumental tombs for the prophets whom your fathers killed. It is easier for you to build monuments than it was for your fathers to obey the prophets. You stone the present prophets while you build monuments to the ancient ones. God in his wisdom said, “I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute.” I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for the martyrdom and the persecution of all the prophets of every generation. Yes, I tell you, you shall be held responsible. Woe to you experts of the law! Your appointed task is to teach people about the kingdom of

God, and instead you are hindering people from entering the kingdom.”

The scribes and Pharisees were furious with Jesus, and they used devious methods in questioning Jesus, hoping to trap him in something he said. Lk. 11:53-54

In the meantime, so many thousands of people had gathered together that they were stepping on one another. Jesus turned to his disciples and warned them, “Always beware of the Pharisees and their teachings. Their hypocrisy cannot be covered up forever. Eventually it will come to light, and people will recognize it for what it is. Lk. 12:1-2a

“My friends, don’t be afraid of those who can do nothing more than murder you. They have no power over your soul. But fear God, for he has not only the power to kill the body but also the power to cast your soul into hell. Lk. 12:4-5

“Every one of you who acknowledges me publicly, I also will acknowledge before our Father who is in heaven. But anyone who denies me publicly will be denied by me before God. Every one who speaks evil against me will be forgiven; but whoever slanders against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven. Whenever any of you is brought to trial before the Jewish authorities, don’t worry about what you should say in your defense. For the Holy Spirit will give you the right words at the very moment you need them.” Lk. 12:8-12

Someone in the crowd shouted to Jesus, “Teacher, please tell my brother to share the inheritance equally with me.” Jesus answered, “Who appointed me a judge over you? Watch out for the sin of covetousness, for a person’s life does not depend upon the abundance of his possessions.” Lk. 12:13-15

Then Jesus told a parable, saying, “The land of a wealthy farmer produced a good crop. The farmer Lk. 12:16-21

thought to himself, 'What am I going to do? All my barns are already full, and I have nowhere to store this new crop.' Then he decided, 'I know what I'll do. I'll tear down my old barns and build bigger ones. Then I will be able to store all my grain and my goods. Then I will say to my soul, Soul you have plenty of goods laid up for many years. Now take it easy. Eat, drink, and be merry.' But God said to that farmer, 'You fool! This very night is your appointed time of death. Then what will happen to all your security? To whom will it belong?' So it is with a man who accumulates treasure for himself, but is not rich toward God."

Lk. 12:35-40 Jesus continued teaching his apostles, saying, "Always be prepared and ready for my return. A bridegroom returns home with his new bride at an unexpected hour and expects his servants to be ready and waiting for him. Those servants whom the master finds awake when he arrives will be praised. Truly I tell you, he will be so pleased with them that he will exchange places with them and serve them. Especially if he arrives late at night or in the wee hours of the morning and finds them ready and waiting! Everyone would be prepared and waiting if they knew the exact hour the groom was going to come. Likewise, a man would be ready and waiting if he knew the exact time a thief was going to break into his house. So be prepared and ready! For I will return at a time you do not expect."

Lk. 12:41-48 Peter said, "Lord, are you telling this parable just for the benefit of us disciples or for everyone?" Jesus replied, "This applies to any faithful servant whose master has given him the responsibility of feeding the other servants. If when the master returns, he finds that servant faithfully carrying out his assigned duties, the master will reward him and give him a promotion. If on the other hand, the servant has been unfaithful, the mas-

ter will punish him severely. Much more is required from those to whom much has been given, for they have been given a greater responsibility.

“My mission to this earth will cause division! O, how I wish the mission were already completed! I have a terrible baptism awaiting me, and O, how I wish it was over with! Don’t think for a minute that I came to bring peace on earth! No, I bring division. From now on, families will be divided. Those who believe in me will be divided from those who reject me. A house of five will be divided three against two, father against son, mother against daughter, and mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law.” Lk. 12:49-53

Speaking to the crowd again, Jesus said, “When you see a cloud appearing in the west, you say at once, ‘It is going to rain.’ And so it does. And when the south wind is blowing, you say, ‘It’s going to be a very hot day today.’ And so it is. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the weather, but you fail to interpret the events that are happening right now.” Lk. 12:54-56

Some in the crowd were very concerned about some Galileans who recently had brought their sacrifices to the temple, and as they were worshiping there, Pilate’s soldiers had killed them. They asked Jesus to comment on the matter. Jesus said, “Do you think that because these Galileans suffered in this way they were worse sinners than any other Galilean? Not at all! But I tell you, unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. The eighteen people who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them were no worse offenders than anyone else who lives in Jerusalem. Not at all! But let me tell you, unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” Lk. 13:1-5

Then Jesus told this parable: “A man planted a fig tree in his vineyard. Three years later he expected to find figs. When he found none, he told his gardener, ‘Cut it down!’” Lk. 13:6-9

Why waste that ground any longer?' The gardener said, 'Let's give it another year. I'll dig around it and put on some fertilizer. If it bears fruit next year, we'll keep it. If not, then we'll cut it down.' "

Lk. 13:10-17     One sabbath, Jesus was teaching in a synagogue, and he saw a crippled woman who had been oppressed by a demon of infirmity for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not fully straighten herself up. Jesus called her over to him and laid his hands upon her. He said, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." Immediately she straightened up and praised God. The leader of the synagogue was angry because Jesus had healed again on the sabbath. He announced to the people, "There are six days on which work ought to be done. Come on one of those days to be healed. Not on the sabbath day." Then Jesus answered him, "You hypocrite! Does not each of you work on the sabbath when you untie your animals from the stable and lead them to water? Isn't it all right then that on the sabbath this woman has been untied from the bonds with which Satan has bound her for eighteen years?" The adversaries of Jesus were put to shame by these words, and the rest of the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that Jesus was doing.

Lk. 13:22-30     Jesus continued stopping at towns and villages on his journey toward Jerusalem, teaching the people along the way. Once someone asked him, "Will only a few people be saved?" Jesus replied, "Don't hesitate to enter the narrow door to heaven. Many will put it off until a later time. But when the householder closes the door, they will not be able to enter. They will knock at the door, crying, 'Lord, open to us.' He will answer, 'I do not know you.' They will begin to argue with him, saying, 'We visited with you when you taught in our streets.' He

will answer, 'I don't know you. Depart from me, you workers of evil.' Believe me, they will weep and grind their teeth when they find themselves excluded from the kingdom of God, and when they see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets inside the kingdom of God. Those in the kingdom of God will come from everywhere in the world. And there will be many surprises! Some who were thought to be least important will be exalted above all, and some who have great reputations will be of little importance."

Some Pharisees came to warn Jesus, saying, "Get away from here quickly for King Herod wants to have you killed." Jesus said to them, "Go and tell that fox that I will cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and then on the third day I will finish my course. Nevertheless, I must go on my way three more days, for no prophet can perish away from Jerusalem."

Lk. 13:31-33

Jesus lamented over the Holy City, saying, "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem! You kill the prophets and stone those whom God sends to you! How often I wanted to gather your children around me as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you would have no part of it! Your destruction is imminent! You will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'"

Lk. 13:34-35

By this time, great crowds were following Jesus, and he told them, "If anyone loves his own father and mother, or wife and children, or brothers and sisters, or even his own life, more than he loves me, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever will not carry his own cross and follow after me, cannot be my disciple. You should consider the cost of discipleship carefully before you follow after me. If you were planning to build a building, you would carefully figure the cost before you began the building. Other-

Lk. 14:25-30

wise you might find that once you had started you didn't have enough money left to complete the job. Then everyone would poke fun at you.

Lk. 14:31-33     "When a king goes to meet another king in war on the battlefield, he first seeks the advice of his generals to decide whether or not his army is strong enough to beat his enemy. If his army is not strong enough, the king will send emissaries to seek a truce. The cost of being my disciple is very high! Whoever is not willing to renounce everything that he has cannot be my disciple."

Lk. 15:1-2     Even the worst kind of sinners were now coming to listen to Jesus. The Jewish officials grumbled about this. They did not realize that Jesus wanted to reclaim all people for the kingdom of God. The officials remarked, "This Jesus accepts sinners and even eats with them."

Lk. 15:3-7     Jesus told a parable: "If you had a hundred sheep, and one of them got lost in the wilderness, would you not leave the ninety-nine and go in search for the one who was lost until you found it? When you found it, you would rejoice. Then you would put it on your shoulders and bring it home. You would call together your friends and neighbors to rejoice with you because you found your sheep that was lost. In similar fashion, there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one strayed sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who never strayed away."

Lk. 15:8-10     Jesus spoke another parable, saying, "If one of you women had ten silver coins, and then lost one, would you not light a lamp and sweep your house and search diligently until you found it? And when you found it, would you not call your friends and neighbors together to rejoice with you because you had found your coin which you had lost? In similar fashion, the angels of God rejoice over one sinner who repents."

Lk. 15:11-24     Jesus spoke still another parable, saying, "There was a

man who had two sons. The younger son pleaded with his father to give him the share of inheritance that would one day be his. The father divided the inheritance between the sons, and soon the younger son took his share and went away. In a distant country, he squandered his entire inheritance in sinful living. When all his money had been spent, there was a dreadful famine in that distant country. And he found himself in a dire situation. In desperation he pleaded with a farmer to take him in, and the farmer gave him the job of feeding the pigs. He had nothing else to eat, so he ate the empty pods from the carob tree, the same food the pigs ate. One day he finally came to his senses, saying to himself, 'My father's hired servants have more than enough food, and here I am, dying of hunger! I will return to my father and tell him, 'I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. From now on you can treat me like one of your hired servants.' As he was returning home, his father saw him in the distance. The father had compassion for his son. He ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against God and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' The father interrupted him and gave instructions to the servants, saying, 'Quickly now, bring the special robe that we have reserved for honored guests, and put it on him. Put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet. Prepare the fattened calf so we can eat and celebrate! My son who was dead is alive again. He was lost and is now found.' And everyone began to celebrate.

"The older son was out in the field working when all of this was taking place. As he was returning, he could hear the sound of music and celebration coming from the house. He asked one of the servants what was going on. The servant replied, 'Your brother has returned! Your

Lk. 15:25-32

father has killed the fattened calf, and everyone is celebrating because his son has returned safe and sound.' The older son was angry and refused to enter into the celebration. The father pleaded with him to join in, but he complained to his father, 'I have worked faithfully for you for many years, and I have never disobeyed your command. Yet you have never given me so much as a young goat so I could have a celebration with my friends. Now when this son of yours returns from his spree of wasting your money upon prostitutes and parties, you kill for him the fattened calf!' The father replied, 'My son, you have always been with me, and everything that is mine has been yours, but it is appropriate to celebrate your brother's return, for he was dead and is now alive, he was lost and is found.' "

Lk. 16:1-9

Jesus told another parable to his disciples: "There was a wealthy man who hired a steward to manage his entire estate. The wealthy man began to hear rumors that the steward was dishonest. So he called him in and said, 'What do you have to say about these rumors concerning your dishonesty? Put all your accounts in order at once. I am planning to turn them over to someone else.' The steward thought to himself, 'What shall I do now? I'm not strong enough to do manual labor, and I'm too proud to beg. I know what I'll do! I'll make as many friends as possible before I leave my job.' He called in each of the wealthy man's debtors and gave them a discount on their debt. To the first, he asked, 'How much do you owe my employer?' The debtor replied, 'Nine hundred gallons of olive oil.' The steward said, 'Take your bill and change it to four hundred and fifty gallons.' To another he asked, 'And how much do you owe?' The debtor replied, 'One thousand bushels of wheat.' The steward said, 'Take your bill and write eight hundred bushels.' The wealthy man soon learned what had taken place. Al-

though he did not approve of the steward's action, yet he admired his resourcefulness. Worldly people are often more shrewd in their ways than spiritually minded people are in their spiritual matters. Material wealth can be used to help others, and how you use it is a test of your character. Make friends with the material wealth entrusted to you so that when material wealth fails, they may receive you into eternal habitations.

“Whoever is faithful in little things is also faithful in great things. Whoever is dishonest in little things is also dishonest in big things. Therefore, if you have not used your material wealth to help others, why should you be entrusted with spiritual riches? Material wealth is useful only as long as one lives, but spiritual wealth is useful for all eternity. And if you are not faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? No one can be faithful to two masters! Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and materialism.” Lk. 16:10-13

The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, scoffed at Jesus when they heard this. Jesus said to them, “You may be able to justify yourselves so far as people are concerned, but God knows what's in your hearts; for what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God.” Lk. 16:14-15

Jesus told a parable: “There was a rich man who wore the finest of clothes, and he dined and partied every day. He lived as one who didn't have a care in the world. There was another man named Lazarus who was a poor man. His body was covered with sores, and he laid outside the rich man's gate. He wanted to get some of the scraps that were thrown out from the rich man's table for the dogs. Often the dogs would lick his sores. When the poor man finally died, he was carried by the angels to be Lk. 16:19-31

with Abraham in the place where all righteous spirits dwell. The rich man also died, and his spirit went to Hades, where the unrighteous spirits dwell. When he looked up and saw Abraham and Lazarus in another place, he cried out in anguish, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me. Send Lazarus to put a drop of cool water on my tongue. I am in anguish in this flame.' But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you had an abundance of good things and Lazarus had nothing but suffering. In this place, now he is comforted and you are in anguish. Here he is not able to help you, because there is a great chasm fixed between us and you. You cannot come over to us, and we cannot cross over to you.' Then the rich man said, 'I beg you, Father Abraham. Send Lazarus to my family on earth then, where I have five brothers who are still alive. Let Lazarus warn them so they don't end up in this place of torment, too.' But Abraham replied, 'They have the scriptures! Let the scriptures warn them.' The rich man replied, 'No, Father Abraham. They won't repent unless someone goes to them from the dead.' Abraham said, 'If they won't listen to what the scriptures say, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.' "

Lk. 17:5-10      The apostles said to Jesus, "Increase our faith!" Jesus said, "If you had faith as tiny as a mustard seed you could say to this sycamore tree, 'Be rooted up, and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. Will anyone who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep for you, say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down at table, and I will wait on you'? Instead, would you not expect him to prepare supper for you and wait on your needs, and then afterward take care of himself? Nor would you thank the servant because he did what you commanded him to do. You would

expect him to do that much. So also in the kingdom of God, when you have done everything that has been commanded of you, you can only say, 'We are unworthy servants. We only have done what was our duty.' "

Jesus continued his journey to Jerusalem. He was traveling on the road between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him and called to him from a distance, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Jesus looked at them and said, "Go and show yourselves to the priest. Have him inspect you and give you a clean bill of health." As they went, they were cured of their disease. One of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned to Jesus, praising God at the top of his voice. He prostrated himself in front of Jesus, giving him thanks. This man was a despised Samaritan. Jesus asked him, "Were there not ten of you cleansed? Where are the nine Jews? Is only this foreigner going to give praise to God for what he has done?" Then Jesus said to the man, "Get up and be on your way. Your faith has made you well."

Lk. 17:11-19

The Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom of God was coming. Jesus replied, "The kingdom of God is not a political movement that you can see. Nor does it have boundaries that you can recognize. The kingdom of God is within you."

Lk. 17:20-21

Later Jesus spoke to his disciples about this, saying, "There will be days when you will wish that I could be with you, but I will not be here. You will hear people say that I am at one place or another. But don't go out looking for me, because I will not be there. When I do return, you will all know about it just as certainly as you cannot hide the brilliance of a flash of lightning. But before that happens, I must suffer many things and be rejected by this nation. As it was in the case of Noah, so will it be in my case. Although retribution does not

Lk. 17:22-37

come immediately, it nonetheless is inevitable. The people were preoccupied with everyday cares and appetites until the day when Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. It was the same in the case of Lot. The people were preoccupied with everyday things right up to the day when Lot left Sodom. Then fire and brimstone rained from heaven and destroyed them all. So will it be in my case. When I return, drop whatever you are doing. Remember Lot's wife? She couldn't get her mind off the things she left behind. Whoever tries to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will preserve it. I tell you, on that night there will be two people in one bed. One will be taken and the other left. There will be two women grinding together. One will be taken and the other left." The disciples asked Jesus, "Those who are taken, Lord, where will they go?" Jesus replied, "Where the body is, there the vultures will be gathered together."

Lk. 18:1-8

Jesus told a parable to the effect that people ought always to pray and not become discouraged. He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who feared neither God nor man. In that same city was a widow who came to him time and time again, saying, 'Give me a decree of protection against the charges of my adversaries.' For a time the judge refused to listen to her plea, but eventually he thought to himself, 'I fear neither God nor man, but if I don't give this widow her decree, she will soon wear me out with her frequent appearances.' " Jesus told the disciples, "Pay attention to what the unrighteous judge said. In similar fashion, will God not vindicate those who cry to him for justice day and night? He will not delay in his pronouncement like the unjust judge, but he will vindicate his children speedily. Even so, faith will be scarce when I return."

Lk. 18:9-14

Jesus also told a parable to some who trusted in their

own self-righteousness for salvation. They despised others who they thought were not as good as they thought they were. Jesus said, "Two men went into the temple to pray. One was a proud, self-righteous Pharisee, and the other was a swindler. The Pharisee stood where he could be noticed by everyone, and he prayed so he could be heard. He prayed, "God, I thank you that I am not like other people who are extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even a swindler like this tax collector standing over there. I fast twice every week, and I give tithes of everything I get.' When the tax collector prayed, he stood off by himself and bowed his head in shame. He beat upon his breast, saying, 'Oh God, be merciful to me for I am a sinner!' I tell you, this man returned to his home justified, but the other did not. Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

## PART VI

# *Jesus Continues Teaching As He Goes to Jerusalem*

Mk. 10:2-8  
Mt. 19:9

SOME Pharisees came to Jesus again to ensnare him with his words, asking, "Do you think it is right for a man to divorce his wife?" Jesus answered, "What did Moses command you?" They replied, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send his wife away." Jesus said, "Moses permitted this because of the hardness of your hearts. That isn't the way God intended it to be from the very beginning. Ever since creation God intended that marriage should be permanent. When a man leaves his parental home to be joined in marriage with his wife, the two become one. Because God has joined them together in marriage, let no man alter what God has done. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery."

Mk. 10:10-12

Later when the disciples were with Jesus in a house where they were staying for the night, they asked him to speak further about this matter of divorce. Jesus said,

“Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against his first wife, and if a wife divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery against her first husband.”

The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry.” But he said to them, “Not all men can receive this precept, but only those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to receive this, let him receive it.” Mt. 10:10-12

One day some parents brought their little children to Jesus that he might lay his hands on them and bless them. The disciples rebuked the parents but Jesus encouraged them, saying, “Let the children come to me and do not hinder them in any way. It is to people like this that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child, shall not enter it.” Mk. 10:13-15

A ruler came to Jesus one day and asked, “Good teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus said, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and your mother.” The young man replied, “I learned those commandments in my youth, and I have kept them all.” And Jesus looking upon him loved him and said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, and follow me.” When the young man heard this he went away filled with sorrow, for he was very rich. Jesus noticed the young man’s downcast look and com- Mk. 10:17-25

mented, "How difficult it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

Lk. 18:26-30 Those who heard Jesus say this, asked, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus replied, "Things that are impossible with men are possible with God." Peter asked, "What about us, we have left everything and followed you?" Jesus said, "Truly I tell you there is no one who has left home or family or property for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundred homes, families, and properties in this life besides inheriting eternal life."

Mt. 20:1-16 Jesus told a parable concerning those who worked for the sake of the kingdom of God. Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is like a man who hired laborers for his vineyard early in the morning. He agreed to pay them a good day's wage and sent them into his vineyard. At nine o'clock he saw some people standing idle in the marketplace, and he hired them to work in his vineyard too. He agreed to pay them whatever was right. At noon he hired some more, and at three in the afternoon he hired still some more. About five in the afternoon he found some other men standing around, and he asked them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' They replied, 'Because no one has hired us.' The man told them to go into his vineyard too. At six o'clock the man told his foreman, 'Call the workers in from the fields and pay them their wages. Pay first those who have worked the shortest time.' Those who had only worked an hour received a full day's pay, as did the others who worked only part of the day. When those who had worked all day received the same pay, they grumbled about it, saying, 'Some of them only worked one hour, and you have paid them the same amount as you paid us who

have worked all day and endured the scorching heat.' The man replied, 'I am doing you no wrong, for I paid you what we agreed in the contract. Be satisfied with what you deserve. Is it not my privilege to do as I choose with what belongs to me? I choose to give to the last worker the same as I give to you. Do you begrudge my generosity?' So the last will be first, and the first last."

Jesus took the twelve apostles aside, and said, "We are soon going up to Jerusalem, and everything that has been written by the prophets about me will be accomplished. The Jewish authorities will turn me over to the Roman authorities, and I will be mocked and spit upon and shamefully treated. They will publicly whip me and then put me to death. But on the third day I will rise again." The apostles could not grasp or understand what Jesus was saying. Lk. 18:31-34

James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Jesus and asked him, "Teacher, we want you to do a favor for us." Jesus said, "What do you want me to do for you?" They said, "Give us permission to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left hand when you establish your kingdom." Jesus said, "You don't know what you are asking. Do you think you are able to drink of the cup that I must drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am to be baptized?" They replied, "We are able." Jesus said, "Indeed, you will drink of the cup of suffering that I drink, and be baptized with the same baptism of experience, but it is not up to me to appoint who will sit on my right hand and who on my left. That is entirely in the hands of the heavenly Father." The other ten apostles were indignant when they heard James and John make their request. Jesus called his disciples around him and said to them, "The worldly powers are always trying to exercise authority over other people, but it shall not be that way among you. In the kingdom of Mk. 10:35-45

God, whoever would be great among you must become a servant, and whoever wants to be the greatest one of all must be the slave of all. I came not to be served but to serve, and to offer my life as a ransom for many others."

Lk. 18:35-43 As Jesus and his disciples were coming into Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. He heard the commotion of all the people, and he inquired what was going on. They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by." The blind man cried out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Those who were in front of the crowd told him to be quiet. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stopped and asked that the man be brought to him. He asked the blind man, "What do you want me to do for you?" The man replied, "Lord, let me receive my sight." Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight! Your faith has brought you healing." Immediately the man received his sight and followed Jesus, glorifying and praising God. Everyone who saw it and heard about it gave praise to God.

Lk. 19:1-10 As Jesus was passing through Jericho, a man named Zacchaeus wanted to see who Jesus was. Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector and very wealthy. He was a short man and could not see Jesus because of the great crowd around him, so he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree which was beside the road. As Jesus approached the tree, he looked up at Zacchaeus and said, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down. I must lodge at your house for the night." Zacchaeus hurried down and received Jesus joyfully into his home. When people saw what took place, many of them began to murmur, "Jesus has gone to be the guest of a man who is a scoundrel." Before Jesus left the home of Zacchaeus, Zacchaeus felt convicted of his sinful life, and he confessed, "Behold, Lord, I will give half of my goods to the poor, and whatever I have defrauded from anyone I will restore four

times over.” Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, and not because you are a son of Abraham. It is the very purpose of my coming to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Jesus then told a parable to the disciples. Many of them thought that since Jesus was nearing Jerusalem, the kingdom of God would be established right away. For this reason Jesus said, “A nobleman of a certain province was planning to go to the capital city of the empire to receive his official appointment, and then return to his province as king. He entrusted ten of his servants with twenty dollars each, and instructed them to invest the money in business deals until he returned. Now the citizens of that province hated the man and they sent an emissary to the capital city with a message, saying, ‘We do not want this man to be our king.’ However the man was appointed as king, and when he returned to his province, he summoned to him the servants to whom he had entrusted his money. He wanted to know how much profit each had made for him. The first reported, ‘Lord, I have increased your investment ten times over.’ The king said, ‘Well done, good servant! You have been faithful in this little matter. Now you shall have authority over ten cities.’ The second servant reported, ‘Lord, I have increased your investment by five times over.’ The king said to him, ‘You shall have authority over five cities.’ A third servant reported, ‘Lord, I am returning your twenty dollars. I was afraid of what you might do to me if I were to lose the money. I know you are a severe man. You take what is not your own, and you reap what you do not sow. Here is your money. I have kept it tucked safely away until you returned. The king said to him, ‘Your own words convict you, you wicked servant! You knew I was a severe man. Why didn’t you put the money in a bank, and at

Lk. 19:11-27

least I would have collected interest?' Turning to the servants who were standing nearby, the king said, 'Take the twenty dollars from him, and give it to the servant who has the two hundred dollars.' The servants grumbled, saying, 'Lord, he already has two hundred dollars!' I tell you, to everyone who uses what he has will more be given, and from him who does not use what he has, even what he has will be taken away from him. As for those enemies of mine who did not want me to be their king, bring them here and put them to death in my presence.' "

Jn. 11:1-4     A messenger brought word to Jesus from Mary and Martha that their brother Lazarus was seriously ill in Bethany. Jesus remarked to his disciples, "The purpose of this illness is not for the death of Lazarus, but for the glory of God. I will be glorified through this situation."

Jn. 11:5-10     Jesus loved Mary and Martha and Lazarus, but he remained two more days in that place before he told his disciples, "Let us return to the province of Judea once again." The disciples said, "Teacher, you can't be serious! The Jewish authorities there are searching for you to stone you to death. You're not going there again, are you?" Jesus replied, "There are twelve hours in the day, and whoever walks in the daylight does not stumble, because he sees the light of the world. But whoever walks in the night will stumble because the light is not with him."

Jn. 11:11-16     Later Jesus told his disciples, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going to wake him up." They said to Jesus, "Lord, if he has only fallen asleep, he will recover." Then Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, and I am glad I was not there when it happened. Now your faith will have an opportunity to grow. Let us

go to him now.” Thomas, called the twin, said to his fellow disciples, “Let us all go, that we may die with him.”

When Jesus arrived in Bethany, he learned that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was just two miles from Jerusalem, and many people had come from the city to console Martha and Mary. When Jesus approached the village, Martha ran to meet him, while Mary remained in the house. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. And even now I know that whatever you ask from God, he will grant you.” Jesus replied, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha said to Jesus, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, even though he die, yet shall he live. Whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” Martha said, “Yes, Lord! I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the Messiah who is to come into the world.” Jn. 11:17-27

Martha rushed back to the house and told Mary quietly, “The Teacher is here, and he wants to see you.” Mary jumped up and ran to meet Jesus. Jesus was still outside the village, resting in the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who had been in the house consoling Mary saw her rise quickly and run out, they followed after her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. Mary ran all the way to Jesus, and knelt down in front of him, saying, “Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died.” Jesus was deeply moved in his spirit when he saw Mary and the other Jews weeping. He asked, “Where have you laid him?” They replied, “Lord, come and see.” When the Jews saw that Jesus was weeping, too, they said, “See Jn. 11:28-37

how he loved him!" Others remarked, "If he had the power to open the eyes of a blind man, couldn't he have kept this man from dying too?"

Jn. 11:38-44 Jesus was deeply moved again when they arrived at the cave that served as a tomb. There he instructed that the stone be removed that covered the opening of the tomb. Martha objected. "Lord, by this time there will be a terrible odor, for he has been dead four days." Jesus said, "Didn't I tell you that if you would only believe you would see the glory of God?" When the stone was removed, Jesus looked heavenward and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I know that you hear me at all times, but I say this for the benefit of those people standing nearby, that they may believe that you sent me." Then Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" Lazarus came forth, his hands and feet bound with bandages, and his face still wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Jn. 11:45-53 Many of the Jews who had watched Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead believed in him. But others went and reported what Jesus had done to the Pharisees. The Jewish officials gathered the council at once, asking, "What shall we do with this man? He performs many miracles. If we let him continue, everyone will believe in him. And then the Roman authorities will come and destroy both our temple and our nation." Caiaphas, the high priest that year, said, "You people don't know what you're talking about at all. Don't you see that it is expedient that one man should die and save our whole nation from destruction?" Without realizing it, the high priest prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, and not for the Jewish nation alone, but for the benefit of all of God's children scattered around the world. From that day on the Jewish authorities were fully determined to put Jesus to death.

Jesus no longer went openly among the Jews, but took his disciples and went several miles north of Bethany to the village of Ephraim. Jn. 11:54

Now the Passover of the Jews was approaching, and Jews from all over were going to Jerusalem to purify themselves. Many of these Jews were hoping to see Jesus. They were asking one another as they stood in the temple, "Do you think he will be coming to the feast?" In the meantime, the Jewish authorities had given orders that if anyone knew where Jesus was, he should notify the authorities so they could arrest him. Jn. 11:55-57

## PART VII

# *The Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus*

Lk. 19:29-34

JESUS and his disciples walked through Bethphage and on to Bethany, on the far side of the Mount of Olives. There Jesus instructed two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the next village, and on the edge of town you will find a colt on which no one has yet sat. Untie it and bring it to me. If anyone should ask you where you are going with the colt, tell him, 'The Lord needs him.' " The two went ahead and found the colt where Jesus had told them it would be. As they were untying the animal, its owners asked, "Why are you untying the colt?" They replied, "The Lord has need of it."

Lk. 19:35-40

When the disciples brought the donkey to Jesus, they put their garments on the colt's back and sat Jesus upon it. As Jesus rode along, the disciples spread their garments and palm branches on the road ahead of him. As Jesus was descending the near side of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of disciples began to rejoice and praise God with loud voices for all the miracles

they had witnessed. They shouted, "Blessed be the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" Some of the Pharisees that were among the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell your disciples to be still." Jesus replied, "I tell you, if these people were silent, the very stones would have to cry out."

As Jesus drew near to the city of Jerusalem, he wept over it, saying, "If even today you would recognize the things that really bring peace with God! But now it is too late. These things are hid from your eyes. The days are coming when your enemies will surround you and hem you in on every side. They will lay a siege against you, and scale your walls, and invade your city. They will destroy every man, woman and child, and they will destroy your city. They will not leave one stone upon another. All this will happen because you refused to accept God's visitation among you." Lk. 19:41-44

Jesus spent the remainder of the day in Jerusalem, and then went back to spend the night at Bethany. The following morning, as Jesus was returning to Jerusalem, he was hungry. Along the road he saw a fig tree, but found no fruit on it, only leaves. Jesus said to the tree, "May no fruit ever come from you again!" The disciples marveled when they saw the fig tree wither immediately. They wanted to know how this was done, and Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith and never doubt, you will do not only what I have done to the fig tree, but you can even say to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and it will be done. If you have faith, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." Mt. 21:17-22

When Jesus and the disciples arrived in Jerusalem, Jesus went to the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold sacrificial animals in the temple area. He overturned the tables of the money-changers, Mk. 11:15-19

and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple. Then Jesus declared, "Is it not written in the scriptures, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations'? Why have you then made it a den of robbers?" The Jewish authorities heard what Jesus had done, and they searched for a legal way to destroy him. They were becoming afraid of the popularity of Jesus, because large crowds were intensely interested in his teaching. When evening came, Jesus and the disciples went out of the city again.

Lk. 20:1-8      One day when Jesus was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the good news, the Jewish authorities approached Jesus and said, "Tell us by what authority you do all these things. Who is it that has given you your authority?" Jesus answered, "Let me ask you a question. Tell me, was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?" The authorities discussed this question among themselves, saying, "If we say it is from heaven, he will reply, 'Why did you not believe him?' but if we say it is from men, then all the people will stone us, for they are convinced that John was a prophet." After discussing these possibilities, the authorities told Jesus they did not know where it was from. Then Jesus said to them, "Then neither will I tell you by what authority I do all these things.

Mt. 21:28-32      "But tell me your opinion about this. A man had two sons. He asked the first son to go and work in the vineyard one day, and the son refused to go. Later he changed his mind and went. The man went to his second son and asked him to do the same thing. He said he would go, but he did not go. Which of the two sons, do you think, did the will of his father?" The Jewish authorities answered, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes will go into the kingdom of God before you. For

John came to you preaching the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him. The tax collectors and prostitutes believed him. Even when you had the opportunity to see the fruits of his ministry, you would not repent and believe him."

Jesus spoke another parable, saying, "There was a man who planted a vineyard and then planted a hedge around his property. After digging a wine press and building a tower, he leased the vineyard out to tenants, and then went into another country. When it was time to pick the fruit, the man sent his servants to the tenants to collect his share of the grapes. The tenants beat one servant, killed another, and stoned another. The owner sent a larger number of servants a second time, but they were treated in the same way. Then he sent his own son, believing that they would have respect for the owner's son. But when the tenants saw the son, they connived among themselves, saying, 'This is the heir. Let us kill him and take his inheritance for ourselves.' They grabbed the son and dragged him outside of the vineyard and killed him. Now let me ask you a question. When the owner of the vineyard comes, what do you think he will do to those tenants?" They said to Jesus, "He will put those evil men to death, and will lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him his share of the fruit at harvest time."

Mt. 21:33-41

Jesus asked the Jewish authorities, "Have you never read in the scriptures, 'The very stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous to behold'? Therefore I declare to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and will be given to a people producing the fruit of the kingdom."

Mt. 21:42-43

When the Jewish authorities heard these parables, they perceived that Jesus was speaking about them. But they

Mt. 21:45-46

were afraid to arrest Jesus in the presence of the large crowd, because the crowd believed Jesus was a prophet.

Mt. 22:1-10 Jesus spoke another parable, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son. He sent servants to notify those who had been invited to the feast that everything was now ready and they could come. When the guests did not arrive, the king sent out other servants, instructing them, 'Tell those who were invited to come to the marriage feast. The dinner is prepared and everything is now ready.' But the guests ignored the notice. One went to his farm, another to his business, while the others seized the servants, shamefully treating and killing them. This made the king angry. He sent his soldiers to destroy those murderers and to burn their cities. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding feast is ready, and those who were first invited were not worthy. Go out along the highways and roads, and invite to the marriage feast as many people as you can find.' The servants gathered everyone they could find, both bad and good, so that the wedding hall was filled with guests.

Mt. 22:11-14 "Now when the king entered the wedding hall and looked at the guests, he saw one man who had no wedding garment. (It was the custom of kings to provide suitable garments for people who could not otherwise afford them, when they came into the presence of the king.) The king said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' The man was speechless. Then the king instructed the attendants, 'Bind this man hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness where men weep and grind their teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

Mk. 12:13  
Lk. 20:20-26 The Pharisees and Herodians were keeping a close watch on Jesus. (The Pharisees were opposed to any foreign rulers over them, while the Herodians were sup-

porters of Herod's Roman government.) They sent spies into the crowd that was following Jesus, and they pretended to be sincere listeners. The spies listened intently to everything Jesus said. They were hoping he would say something incriminating, so that he could be brought before the Jewish authorities and turned over to the jurisdiction of the Roman governor. They said to him, "Teacher, we know that what you say is right. You show no partiality, but truly teach the way of God. Tell us, is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" Jesus perceived their craftiness, and said to them, "Show me a coin. Whose image and inscription does it bear?" They replied, "Caesar's." Jesus said, "Then give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." They were astonished at the wisdom of his answer, and they remained silent. They were not able to ensnare Jesus in his words in the presence of the crowd.

Later that same day, Sadducees came to Jesus. They do not believe in the resurrection of the dead, and they asked Jesus, "Teacher, Moses wrote in the scriptures that if a married man has no children and dies, then his unmarried brother must marry his widow and bear children in the deceased brother's name. Now we have a case where there were seven brothers. The first married and died, having no children. So the second and the third, down to the seventh—all had her as their wife. After all seven brothers died, the woman died. Tell us, now, whose wife will she be in the resurrection? For all seven had her." Mt. 22:23-28

Jesus replied, "You are wrong in your thinking, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. In the resurrection, people will not marry like they do on earth, but will be like the angels in heaven. As for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read the scrip- Mt. 22:29-33

tures where God said, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living." The crowd marveled at Jesus' teaching.

Mk. 12:28-34a One of the scribes, a teacher of religion, had been listening to Jesus as he had answered the questions that were posed to him. Seeing that Jesus had answered these questions well, he asked, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" Jesus answered, "The most important commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength, and the next important commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these." The scribe said, "You are right, Teacher. It is true that we are to love God with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, which is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." Jesus commended him for his wise reply, and said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."

Mt. 22:41-46 Then Jesus asked the Pharisees a question, saying, "What is your opinion of the Christ? Whose son is he?" They replied, "The son of David." Then Jesus said, "How is it then, that David, when he was inspired by the Holy Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand until I put your enemies under your feet'? If David calls him his Lord, how can it be that Christ is his son?" No one was able to answer this question, and from that day on, no one dared ask Jesus any more questions.

Mk. 12:41-44 Jesus was standing near the treasury chest in the temple watching the rich people putting their gifts into the treasury. Then a poor widow came along and put in one penny. Turning to his disciples, Jesus said, "Truly I tell

you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the rest. They all contributed out of their wealth, but she has contributed out of her poverty, giving everything she had."

Among the crowds that came to Jerusalem to worship at the feast of the Passover were some Greeks. They came to Philip and said, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip mentioned this to Andrew, and the two of them went and told Jesus. Jesus told them, "The hour has come for me to be glorified. Truly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains only a grain of wheat, but if it dies, it multiplies. Whoever loves his life will lose it, and whoever loves his spiritual life more than his earthly life will gain eternal life. Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, for my servants must be where I am. Anyone who serves me will be honored by the heavenly Father." Jn. 12:20-26

"My soul is deeply troubled now," said Jesus. "Shall I ask my heavenly Father to save me from this hour? No! It was for this very purpose that I have come to this hour. Heavenly Father, may your name be glorified." Then a voice was heard from heaven, "I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again." Some in the crowd said they had heard thundering. Others said, "An angel has spoken to him." Jesus said, "This heavenly voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Judgment has come to the sinful world. Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out, for when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself." With these words, Jesus was indicating by what death he was to die. Some in the crowd commented, "We have heard that the scriptures say that the Christ will remain forever. How can you say that the Christ is to be lifted up? Who is this Christ?" Jesus said to them, "The light of God is with you for a little while longer. Walk while you still have that light. Otherwise the dark- Jn. 12:27-36a

ness will overtake you, and whoever walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become children of the light."

**Jn. 12:36b-43** Jesus then departed and hid himself from them. Even though he had performed many miracles in their presence, they did not believe in him as the Christ. This fulfilled the words spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "Lord, those to whom the power of the Lord has been revealed have not believed our report." Isaiah further said: "Because of their hardness of heart, God has allowed their eyes to be blinded, so that they cannot see and understand and turn to the Christ to heal them." Isaiah said this because he saw the glory of Christ and spoke of him. Many of the Jewish authorities believed that Jesus was the Christ, but they did not confess it publicly for fear of the Pharisees, who would have excommunicated them from the synagogue. Unfortunately, they were more concerned about the opinion of men than they were about the praise of God.

**Jn. 12:44-50** Jesus shouted to the crowd, "Whoever believes in me, believes not in me alone but in him who sent me. Whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come as God's light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. I will not judge anyone who hears my teachings and disobeys them. I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. Whoever rejects me and does not accept my teachings already has a judge, for the word I have spoken will be his judge on the final day. I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has told me what to say. I know that what the Father has said is eternal life, and I have said whatever the Father has told me to say."

**Lk. 21:5-9** Some people were admiring the beauty of the temple, especially the huge blocks of marble and the tremendous

wealth represented in the building. Jesus told them, "The day is coming when these things you are admiring will be destroyed, and there will not be one stone left upon another." They asked, "Teacher, when will this happen? What sign will indicate to us that this is about to take place?" Jesus replied, "Don't be led astray by signs, for many will come saying, 'I am the Christ,' and 'The time is at hand!' Do not follow after them. Do not be terrified when you hear of wars and riots. These things must first take place, but the end will not be immediate."

Jesus elaborated on this theme, saying, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes and famines and plagues in many places. There will be terrifying signs from heaven. But before these things happen, you will be arrested and persecuted. You will be dragged before the synagogue authorities and put in prisons. You will have to defend yourself before kings and governors for my name's sake. This will be an opportunity for you to bear witness. Don't plan and meditate about how you are going to make your defense. The Holy Spirit will give you the words and the wisdom which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict. Some of you will be betrayed by your family or friends, and some of you will even be put to death, and everyone will hate you for my name's sake. But not one hair of your head will perish! By your endurance, you will win your souls for eternal life.

Lk. 21:10-19

"When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who believe in me depart from the city and leave the province and flee to the mountains. Let no one from the countryside enter the city. These will be days of vengeance to fulfill everything that has been prophesied. Woe to those who are pregnant or are nursing babies

Lk. 21:20-24

in those days! For great distress will be upon the earth, and wrath will fall upon all the people. Many will die by the edge of the sword, and others will be led captive to all nations. Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

Lk. 21:25-28 "There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and the nations of the earth will be distressed and perplexed by the storms and the tidal waves of the sea. Men's hearts will faint with fear at the predictions of what is coming upon the world. And then they will see me returning in a cloud with great power and glory. When these things begin to take place, look up and be encouraged, because your redemption is drawing near."

Lk. 21:29-33 Jesus told a parable, saying, "When you see a fig tree or any other tree leafing out, you know that summer is approaching. So also, when you see these signs taking place, you will know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, that generation will not pass away till everything has taken place. The heavens and the earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away."

Lk. 21:34-36 "Don't allow your hearts to be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the anxieties of this life. Otherwise, that day will come upon you suddenly like a snare just as it will come upon everyone who dwells upon the earth. Be alert at all times, and keep praying that you will have strength to escape everything that is going to happen and that you will be able to stand before me."

Lk. 21:37-38 Jesus taught in the temple every day, and at night he returned to his place of lodging on the Mount of Olives. Early each morning, the people returned to the temple in order to listen to Jesus.

Mt. 25:1-13 Jesus often spoke in parables. He said, "The kingdom of heaven can be compared to ten maidens who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five

of them were foolish, and five were wise. The foolish ones brought their lamps, but they took no oil with them. The wise maidens took flasks of oil for their lamps. When the bridegroom was delayed, they all rested and slept. At midnight there was a cry, 'Here comes the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' All the maidens rose and trimmed their lamps. The foolish maidens said to the wise maidens, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise maidens replied, 'If we do that, there might not be enough for us and for you. You had better go to the dealers and buy oil for yourselves.' While the foolish maidens went to buy their oil, the bridegroom came. Those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut. Later, when the foolish maidens came, they cried, 'Lord, Lord, open to us.' But he replied, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' Keep alert therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour of my return."

Jesus said, "When I return in my glory, and all the angels with me, then I will sit on my glorious throne. Before me will be gathered all the people of the world, and I will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. I will place the sheep on my right hand, and the goats on my left. To those at my right hand I will say, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous ones will ask, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you as a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?'

MT. 25:31-40

And I will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.'

Mt. 25:41-46 "Then I will say to those on my left hand, 'You are cursed. Depart from me and go into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me. I was naked and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they will ask, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then I will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous ones will go into eternal life."

Mt. 26:1-5 When Jesus had finished teaching, he said to his disciples, "In two days the Passover will be here, and I will be delivered up to be crucified." Even at that moment the Jewish authorities gathered in the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest, and plotted how they could arrest Jesus secretly and put him to death. They came to the conclusion, however, that they could not do it during the feast without causing a riot among the people.

Mt. 26:14-16 It was then that Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve apostles, went to Caiaphas and said, "What will you give me if I deliver Jesus to you?" They paid him ten dollars, the price of a slave. From that moment, Judas sought an opportunity to betray Jesus.

Mt. 26:6-7, 9-13  
Jn. 12:4 When Jesus returned to Bethany for the evening, he was a guest in the home of Simon the leper, and a woman came up to Jesus with an alabaster jar of very expensive ointment. She poured it on his head as he was eating. When Judas Iscariot saw this, he was indignant, saying, "Why this terrible waste? This ointment could have been sold for a large sum, and the money given to the poor."

But Jesus said, "Why do you trouble this woman? She has done a beautiful thing for me. You will always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. By pouring this ointment on my body, she has prepared me for burial. Truly I tell you, wherever the good news is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will be told in memory of her."

Then the day of unleavened bread arrived, the day on which all yeast was rigidly excluded from every Jewish household for the duration of the season. It was also the day on which the passover lamb had to be sacrificed. Jesus told Peter and John to prepare the passover lamb so that Jesus and the apostles could eat it. They asked Jesus, "Where shall we prepare it?" Jesus told them, "As you enter Jerusalem, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house where he enters, and tell the householder to show you the guest room where we will eat the passover. He will show you to a large upper room that is furnished. Get everything ready for us there." They went and found everything as Jesus had told them, and they prepared the passover feast. Lk. 22:7-13

Jesus knew even before the feast of the Passover, that his hour had come to depart out of this world and go to the Father. During the supper, Jesus rose from the table. He laid aside his outer garments and put a towel on himself as an apron. Then he poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel. When it was Simon Peter's turn to have his feet washed, Peter said, "Lord, do you intend to wash my feet, too?" Jesus replied, "You don't know now what I am doing, but afterward you will understand." Peter said, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus said, "If I do not wash you, you have no part in me." Peter said, "Lord, in that case wash not only my Jn. 13:1-11

feet, but also my hands and my head!" But Jesus said, "Anyone who has already bathed needs only to have his feet washed. You are clean, but not all of you are clean." Jesus knew who was going to betray him, and that is why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

Jn. 13:12-20

When Jesus had finished washing their feet, he put his garment back on and resumed his place. He said, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If your Lord and Teacher has washed your feet, certainly you also should wash one another's feet. I have given you an example, that you should also do as I have done to you. Truly I tell you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor am I greater than the one who sent me. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. I am not speaking to all of you, for I know whom I have chosen. The scriptures say, 'He who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.' I tell you this now, before it takes place, so when it happens you will believe that I am the Christ. Truly I tell you, whoever receives anyone that I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the Father who sent me."

Mk. 14:18-21

As they continued eating, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, one of you who is eating with me now will betray me." The disciples became sorrowful, and they asked one another, "Is it I?" Jesus said, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread in the same dish with me. What the scriptures have written about me will take place, but woe to that man by whom I am betrayed! It would have been better for him if he had not been born."

Mk. 14:22-25

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed and broke it. He gave it to the disciples, saying, "Take this and eat; it is my body." Then Jesus took a cup of wine, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and the disciples all drank of it. Jesus said to them, "This

is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I shall not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

After they had sung a hymn, Jesus and the apostles went to the Mount of Olives. Jesus told them, “You will all fall away because of me this night, for the scriptures say, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.” Peter declared emphatically, “Even if everyone else deserts you, I will never fall away.” Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this very night you will deny me three times before the cock crows.” Peter said, “Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you.” And all the disciples said the same thing. Mt. 26:30-35

Jesus said, “Don’t let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. I am going to prepare a place for you and I will come again to take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. You all know where I am going.” Thomas said, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on, you know what God is like, because you have seen him in me.” Jn. 14:1-7

Philip said, “Lord show us the Father and we shall be satisfied.” Jesus replied, “Have I been with you this long, and still you do not know who I am, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you still say, ‘Show us the Father?’ Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells within me does his work in me. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Jn. 14:8-11

Father is in me. Or else just believe me for the sake of the miracles I do.”

Jn. 14:12-17 Jesus continued speaking to his disciples, saying, “Truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will also do the miracles I do. He will do even greater works than I do because I go to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it so that the Father may be glorified through me. If you ask anything in my name, I will do it. If you love me, you will keep my commandments. I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, the Holy Spirit, to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth, whom worldly people cannot receive because they do not recognize him or know him. You know him, for he dwells with you, and will be in you.

Jn. 14:18-24 “I will not leave you desolate. I will come to you. In a little while the world will see me no more, but you will see me. And because I live, you will live also. When that happens, you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and obeys them will love me. Whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.” Judas (not Iscariot) said, “Lord, how is it that you will manifest yourself to us, and not to the world?” Jesus replied, “If a person loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me does not obey my teaching. This saying is not mine, but the Father’s who sent me.

Jn. 14:25-31 “I have spoken these things to you while I am still with you. But the Holy Spirit is the Counselor the Father will send in my name. He will teach you all things and remind you of all that I have said to you. I leave my peace with you. My peace is not like the peace that the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled or fearful. You have heard me say, ‘I must go away, and I will re-

turn to you.' If you really love me, you will rejoice because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. I tell you these things before they take place, so that when they do take place, you will believe. I will not have much opportunity to talk with you more, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me, but I do as the Father has commanded me to do, so that the world may know that I love the Father.

"I am the true vine, and the Father is the vinedresser. Jn. 15:1-11  
Every branch of mine that bears no fruit, he cuts away. Every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes that it may bear even more fruit. You are already made clean by the words which I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I will abide in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me, and I abide in him, will bear much fruit. Anyone who is apart from me can bear nothing. If a person does not abide in me, he is cut off from the branch and he withers. Those dead branches are gathered and thrown into the fire and burned. If you abide in me, and my teachings abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified if you prove to be my disciples and bear much fruit. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you obey my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

"My commandment is that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you obey my instructions. I no longer call you servants, for a servant doesn't know what his master is do- Jn. 15:12-17

ing. I have called you friends, and everything that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You didn't choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should bear fruit that endures. Then whatever you ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you. So I command you then to love one another.

Jn. 15:18-27     "If the world hates you, remember that it hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love you as one of its own. But because I chose you out of the world, you are not of the world anymore, and therefore the world hates you. Remember what I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' Since they persecuted me, they will persecute you. If they keep my teachings, they will keep yours also. People will mistreat you on my account, because they do not know the Father who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not know what sin is, but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my Father also. If I had not performed among them the miracles which no one else did, they would not be aware of sin. But now they have seen the miracles, and they hate both me and my Father. This only fulfills the scriptures that say, 'They hated me without reason.' When the Counselor comes, the Spirit of truth whom I shall send to you from the Father, he will bear witness to me. Then you will be my witnesses because you have been with me from the beginning.

Jn. 16:1-4a     "I have told you all these things to keep you from falling away. The time is coming when they will excommunicate you from the synagogues. Indeed, the hour is coming when whoever kills you will think he is offering a service to God. They will do this because they do not know the Father or me. I have told you these things that when their hour comes, you will remember that I told you of them.

“I did not say all these things to you before, because I was still with you. But now I am going to the Father who sent me, and yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ But now that I have told you these things, your hearts are filled with sorrow. Nevertheless, I am telling you the truth when I say that it is to your advantage that I go away. If I did not go away, the Counselor would not come to you. But when I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment: of sin, because people do not believe in me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father and will not be seen anymore; of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. Jn. 16:4b-11

“There are many other things I would like to tell you, but you are not able to bear them now. The Spirit of truth will guide you into all the truth when he comes. He will not speak on his own authority. He will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that will happen. He will glorify me by declaring to you my person and my work. Everything that the Father has is mine. That is why I said that the Holy Spirit will take the things which are mine and tell them to you. Jn. 16:12-15

“A little while from now you will not see me, and a while later you will see me again.” The disciples discussed this with one another, saying, “What does he mean when he says such things as ‘a little while’ and ‘because I go to the Father’?” Jesus knew what they wanted to ask him, so he said, “Truly I tell you, in a little while you will be sorrowful, but the worldly people will rejoice. But your weeping and sorrow will soon turn into joy. When a woman is experiencing the pangs of childbirth, she has sorrow because of the pain. But when her child is born, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy over her newborn child. Similarly, you will have sorrow now, but I will see you Jn. 16:16-24

again soon, and then your hearts will rejoice, and nobody can take that joy from you. On that day you will ask nothing of me. Truly I tell you, if you ask the Father for anything in my name, he will give it to you. Until now, you have asked nothing in my name; ask and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

Jn. 16:25-28     “I have been speaking to you in figures. The hour is approaching when I will no longer speak to you in figures but tell you plainly of the Father. In that day, you will ask whatever you want in my name. I will not have to pray to the Father for you, for the Father himself loves you since you have loved me and have believed that I came from the Father. I came from the Father and have come into the world, but soon I will leave the world and return to the Father.”

Jn. 16:29-33     His disciples said, “Ah, now you are speaking plainly to us, not in figures! Now we know that you know all things, and we don’t need to ask you any more questions. Now we believe that you came from God.” Jesus said, “Do you now believe? The hour is coming, and indeed it is here, when you will all be scattered to your homes and you will leave me alone. Yet I will not be alone, for the Father is with me. I have told you these things that you may have peace in me. You will have tribulation while you are in the world, but be of good cheer, for I have overcome the world.”

Jn. 17:1-5     Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour is here! Glorify your Son that he may glorify you. You have given him power over all flesh so that he might give eternal life to all whom you have given to him. Eternal life is to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorify you on earth, having accomplished the work which you have given me to do. Now Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory which I had with you before the world was made.

“I have shown forth your name to the men you have given me out of the world. They were yours, and you have given them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you, for I have given to them the words which you gave to me. They have received them and know in truth that I came from you, and they have believed that you did send me. I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those whom you have given me. I am glorified in them, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine. Now I will no longer be in the world, but they will remain in the world, and I will be coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name which you have given to me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in your name. I have guarded them. Only the son of perdition is lost, in order that the scriptures might be fulfilled. Now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world that my disciples may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them your word. The world hates them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I am not praying for you to take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one. Consecrate them in the truth, for your word is truth. Even as you sent me into the world, so do I send them into the world. I devoted myself to them that they may also be devoted in truth.

Jn. 17:6-19

“I do not pray for these disciples only, but also for those who will believe in me through their teaching. May they all be one. May they also be in us, as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given to them the glory which you have given to me, that they may be one even as we are one, and that the world may know that you have loved them even as you have loved me. Father, I desire that those whom you have given to me may be

Jn. 17:20-26

with me where I am, to behold my glory which you have given to me in your love for me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world has not known you, but I have known you, and these disciples know that you have sent me. I have declared your name to them, and I will continue to declare it so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

Mk. 14:32-36 Jesus and his disciples went to the garden of Gethsemane, near the foot of the Mount of Olives. Jesus said to the disciples, "Sit here, while I pray." Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John. Jesus was deeply distressed and sorely troubled. He said to the disciples, "My soul is very sorrowful as death draws near. Remain here with me and watch." Jesus went a little farther and fell to the ground, praying that if it were possible, this hour might pass from him. He prayed, "Abba Father, all things are possible with you. I want you to remove this cup from me, yet I want your will to be done."

Mk. 14:37-38 Jesus returned to the disciples and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, "Are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation, for the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak."

Mk. 14:39-40 Again Jesus went away from them and prayed, repeating the same words. Again he returned to find the disciples sleeping, for they were very tired. They did not know what to say to Jesus.

Mk. 14:41-42 Jesus returned to them a third time and said, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough. The hour has arrived. See! My betrayer is here. I am betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us be going!"

Mk. 14:43-47  
Lk. 22:51 While Jesus was still speaking, Judas Iscariot arrived with a mob sent by the Jewish authorities. They were armed with swords and clubs. Judas had told them be-

forehand, "The one I shall kiss is the man you want. Grab him and lead him away safely." When Judas arrived, he went to Jesus and said, "Teacher!" Then he gave him an affectionate kiss. The mob grabbed hold of Jesus and held him securely. One of the disciples drew his sword and struck out at the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Jesus said, "Let's have no more of this!" Then he touched the man's ear and healed it.

Jesus addressed the mob, saying, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I was in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. Nonetheless, let the scriptures be fulfilled." Mk. 14:48-49

The disciples all left Jesus and ran away. One young man followed after Jesus, wearing only a linen sheet around his body. When the mob seized him, they grabbed hold of the sheet, and the young man ran away naked. Mk. 14:50-52

The mob brought Jesus to Caiaphas, the high priest, and before the assembled Jewish council. Peter had been following Jesus at a distance. He had followed right into the courtyard of the high priest, and was sitting among the guards warming himself by the fire. When the chief priests and the council were looking for people to give evidence against Jesus so they could put him to death, they could find no one. There were many who bore false witness against Jesus, but in their testimony they did not agree with one another. Some false witnesses said, "We heard him say, 'I will destroy the temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another not made with hands.'" Yet even those who said this did not agree in their testimony with one another. The high priest stood up amidst the council, and asked Jesus, "Do you have any statement to make? What do you have to say to these men who testify against you?" Jesus remained silent and made no answer. Again the high Mk. 14:53-65a  
Mt. 26:68

priest asked him, "Are you the Christ, God's anointed one?" Jesus replied, "I am. And you will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of God's Power and returning in judgment." The high priest tore his clothes, which he was required to do when he heard blasphemy. "What need do we have for any further witnesses?" he shouted. "What do you think of this blasphemy which you have heard?" Everyone in the council condemned Jesus as deserving death. Some even began to spit on him. Some blindfolded him and then struck him, saying to him, "Prophecy for us! Tell us who it was who struck you."

Mk. 14:66-72

While Peter was still in the courtyard, one of the high priest's maids saw Peter warming himself. She looked at him and said, "You also were with Jesus of Nazareth." Peter denied it, saying, "I don't know him! And I don't know what you're talking about." Later the maid saw him again standing by the gateway, and she told the bystanders, "This man is one of the followers of Jesus." Again Peter denied it. But the bystanders said to Peter, "You must be one of them, for you are a Galilean." Peter invoked a curse upon himself and swore an oath, saying, "I do not even know this man of whom you are speaking." Peter then heard the cock crow, and he remembered what Jesus had said. He broke down and wept.

Jn. 18:28-32

It was early in the morning when they led Jesus from the palace of Caiaphas to the judgment hall. The Jewish authorities did not enter the judgment hall themselves. They wanted to eat the passover meal, and they did not want to defile themselves. So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What accusation do you bring against this man?" They replied, "If this man were not the worst kind of evildoer, we would not have handed him over to

you.” Pilate asked, “Why don’t you try him and judge him by your own law?” The Jewish authorities said, “It is not legal for us to put anyone to death.” Jesus had already predicted that he would be put to death by crucifixion, the Roman method of execution.

Pilate entered the judgment hall and had Jesus brought in to him for questioning. Pilate asked, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus replied, “Do you ask this because you want to know for yourself, or did others tell you this about me?” Pilate said, “Am I a Jew? Your fellow Jews and the chief priest have handed you over to me for judgment. Now, what have you done?” Jesus said, “My kingship is not of this world. If my kingship were of this world, my followers would have fought to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But my kingship is not from this world.” Pilate said, “So then you are a king?” Jesus replied, “You say that I am a king. The purpose for which I was born and brought into this world is to bear witness to the truth. Whoever is of the truth listens to my voice.” Pilate said disdainfully, “What is truth?” Jn. 18:33-38a

When Judas Iscariot saw that Jesus was condemned, he repented and brought back the ten dollars to the Jewish authorities, saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” The authorities replied, “What does that matter to us? That is your problem.” Judas threw the money into the temple, and went away and hanged himself. When the chief priests picked up the money, they said, “It is not lawful for us to put this money into the treasury, since it represents blood money.” They discussed the matter and decided to buy a plot of ground that belonged to the pottery maker, to use as a cemetery for burying strangers. This fulfilled what had been spoken by Jeremiah, the prophet, “And they took the” Mt. 27:3-7,  
9-10

ten dollars, the price set on him by the sons of Israel, and with it they purchased the field of the potter, as the Lord instructed me.”

Lk. 23:4-8 Pilate went back outside to speak with the Jewish authorities and to the mobs that had gathered. He said, “I find no fault in this man.” The Jews became furious in their charges, saying, “He is always stirring up trouble among the Jews, all the way from Galilee to Jerusalem.” When Pilate heard that Jesus was from Galilee, he sent Jesus to Herod, for the province of Galilee was Herod’s jurisdiction. Herod was in Jerusalem at that time, and Herod was very happy to see Jesus. He had desired for a long time to see this Jesus that he had heard so much about. He was hoping to see Jesus perform some miracle.

Lk. 23:9-12 Herod questioned Jesus at some length, but Jesus made no reply to his questions. The Jewish authorities stood by, vehemently making accusations against Jesus. Herod and his soldiers treated Jesus with contempt. They made fun of him by putting on him one of Herod’s discarded robes, and then returning him to Pilate. Formerly Herod and Pilate had been at enmity with each other, but on this day they became friends.

Mt. 27:15-18 It was the custom of Pilate to release a Jewish prisoner, whomever the people chose, during the feast of the Passover. Pilate had a notorious prisoner by the name of Barabbas brought out. He was guilty of insurrection, robbery, and murder. Pilate knew that the Jews had brought Jesus to him out of envy. When he had gathered all the Jews together, Pilate had Barabbas stand next to Jesus. Then he asked, “Which one do you want me to release for you? Barabbas, or this Jesus who is called the Christ?”

Mt. 27:19 At that moment, Pilate’s wife sent a message to him, saying, “Have nothing to do with this just man. When I was resting today I had a nightmare over this matter.”

Meanwhile the Jewish authorities persuaded the crowd that they should ask for Barabbas and have Jesus put to death. Pilate asked the crowd once more, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" The crowd shouted for Barabbas. Mt. 27:20-21

Pilate asked, "What shall I do then with Jesus who is called the Christ?" They replied, "Let him be crucified!" Pilate asked, "Why, what crime has he committed?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified! Let him be crucified!" Mt. 27:22-23

When Pilate saw that he would create a riot if he were to try to change their minds, he called for a basin of water to be brought to him. He washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person. You will have to take the blame upon yourselves." The people shouted back, "May his blood be upon us and upon our children." Mt. 27:24-25

Barabbas was released to the crowd, and after Jesus had been cruelly whipped before the crowd, he was turned over to the soldiers to be crucified. Mt. 27:26

The soldiers took Jesus into the common hall. There they stripped him of his clothes, and put on him a faded purple robe. They made a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and placed a reed in his right hand. They mocked Jesus by bowing before him, and saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Mt. 27:27-29

Pilate went before the crowd once again, and said to them, "Behold I am bringing this man out for you once more, that you may know that I find no crime in him." Jesus was brought out before them, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to the crowd, "Here is the man!" When the Jewish officials saw Jesus, they cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no crime in him." The Jewish authorities replied, "We Jn. 19:4-11

have a law that says such a man ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God.” Pilate was afraid when he heard these words, and he took Jesus back into the palace to question him further. Pilate asked, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave no answer. Pilate asked, “Will you not speak to me? Do you not know that I have the power either to release you or to crucify you?” Jesus said, “You would have no power over me at all unless it had been given to you from above. Those who delivered me to you have the greater sin.”

**Jn. 19:12–16** Pilate wanted to release Jesus, but the Jewish authorities cried out, “If you release this man, you are not Caesar’s friend. Anyone who makes himself a king sets himself against Caesar.” When Pilate heard these words, he returned once more and sat down in the judgment seat. Pilate said to the Jewish authorities, “Here is your King!” They cried out, “Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!” Pilate asked, “Shall I crucify your King?” The Jewish authorities answered, “We have no king but Caesar.” Then Pilate turned Jesus over to the soldiers to be crucified.

**Mk. 15:19–20**  
**Lk. 23:32** The soldiers removed the robe from him, and began to spit on him. Someone grabbed the reed out of his hand and struck him on the head with it. After putting Jesus’ clothes back on him, they led him out. Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with Jesus.

**Mt. 27:32–34,**  
**38** As they were marching toward the crucifixion site outside the city wall, the soldiers compelled a man from Cyrene, whose name was Simon, to carry the cross. When they arrived at Golgotha, they crucified Jesus between the two criminals, one on the right and one on the left. They offered him a drink of wine mingled with gall, but he refused to drink it.

It was nine o'clock in the morning when they put Jesus on the cross. They placed a sign on his cross which read, "The King of the Jews." Those who were watching the crucifixion ridiculed Jesus, saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself and come down from the cross!" The chief priests remarked to one another, saying, "He saved others, but he cannot save himself. Why doesn't this Christ, the King of Israel, come down from his cross now so we can all believe him? He trusted in God, why doesn't God rescue him now if he wants him?"

Mk. 15:25-26,  
29-32a  
Mt. 27:42b-43

Jesus said, "Father forgive them. They do not know what they are doing."

Lk. 23:34a

One of the criminals also being crucified spoke insolently to Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal rebuked him, saying, "Do you have no fear of God? We are under the same sentence of death as he is. We are receiving our just reward, but this man has done nothing wrong." Turning to Jesus, the criminal said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Lk. 23:39-43

When the soldiers had fastened Jesus to the cross, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. But Jesus' tunic was woven in one piece without a seam, so they decided to throw the dice to see which soldier should receive it. This was to fulfill the scripture, "They parted my garments among them, and for my clothing they threw the dice."

Jn. 19:23-24

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was standing near the cross of Jesus, along with some of Jesus' followers. Jesus looked at his mother and then looked at the apostle John. To his mother he said, "Woman, behold your son!"

Jn. 19:25-27

indicating the apostle John. Then Jesus said to John, "Behold your mother!" From that day on, John took Mary, the mother of Jesus, into his own home.

Mt. 27:45-47,  
49

From noon there was darkness over all the earth for about three hours. About 3:00 P.M. Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Some of the bystanders heard this, and said, "This man is calling for Elijah." Others said, "Let us wait and see if Elijah will come and save him."

Jn. 19:28-30a  
Lk. 23:46

Jesus knew by now that everything was finished, but in order to fulfill the scriptures, he said, "I am thirsty." The soldiers soaked a sponge with vinegar, and held it up to Jesus on a stick. When Jesus tasted the vinegar, he said, "It is finished." Then Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Father, into your hands I voluntarily give my spirit." Having said this, Jesus breathed his last.

Mt. 27:51-53

And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook, and the rocks were split; the tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

Lk. 23:47-49

The commander of the troops had been watching everything that had taken place, and he praised God, saying, "Certainly this man was innocent!" When the crucifixion was over, the crowds who had gathered to watch, returned to their homes in deep sorrow. The friends and followers of Jesus watched everything from a distance.

Jn. 19:31-34,  
36-37

The Jewish authorities wanted the body of Jesus taken down and removed before 6:00 P.M., when the day of Preparation ended and the sabbath day began. They did not want the bodies to remain on the crosses during the sabbath, so they asked Pilate to have the legs of the

crucified men broken. The soldiers broke the legs of the two criminals who had been crucified with Jesus, but when they saw that Jesus was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and blood and water oozed out. These things occurred so that the scriptures might be fulfilled, "Not a bone of him shall be broken," and another scripture which says, "They shall look on him whom they have pierced."

Late in the afternoon, a wealthy disciple of Jesus by the name of Joseph, from the city of Arimathea, went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. When Joseph was permitted to remove the body of Jesus, he wrapped it in a clean linen sheet, and laid it in his own tomb which he had hewn in the rocks. Then he rolled a large stone over the entrance to the tomb, and departed. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, the mother of Jesus, remained, sitting near the tomb. Mt. 27:57-61

The Jewish officials went to Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember how the impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' Therefore we request you to order that the tomb be securely guarded until after the third day so his disciples cannot steal the body away and tell people, 'He has risen from the dead.' If that happens, the last fraud will be worse than the first." Pilate said to them, "Take a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can." They went and sealed the tomb and set a guard in front of it. Mt. 27:62-66

## PART VIII

# *The Resurrection of Jesus*

Mt. 28:1-2a

Lk. 24:2-9, 11

AT EARLY DAWN of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. While they were on their way, a great earthquake took place, and when the women arrived at the tomb, they found the stone rolled away, but they did not find the body in the tomb. While they were standing there puzzled and perplexed, two men appeared to them in dazzling robes. The women were frightened, and they looked at the ground. The angels asked, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? Don't you remember how he told you while he was still in Galilee that he must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again?" The women remembered the words of Jesus, and they went and told the eleven apostles and all the other followers. But the other people thought the women were just spreading idle chatter, and they did not believe them.

Jn. 20:3-10

Peter and John decided to go to the tomb to see for themselves, and as they came nearer, John outran Peter and reached the tomb first. John stooped to look into

the tomb, but he did not go in. He saw only the linen sheet lying there. Peter went into the tomb, and he not only saw the linen sheet, but also the napkin which had been used to cover the head of Jesus. It was not with the linen sheet, but was off to the side with its folds still in it. Then John came in and inspected the tomb also. Peter and John believed that Jesus must have risen, even though they did not yet know that the scriptures said that he must rise from the dead. The disciples returned to their home.

Mary Magdalene remained near the tomb, weeping. Jn. 20:11-18  
She stooped to peek into the tomb, and she saw two angels in white clothing, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" Mary replied, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." Mary turned around to see Jesus standing behind her, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" Mary thought that Jesus was the gardener, and she said to him, "Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will remove him." Then Jesus spoke her name, saying, "Mary." She exclaimed, "Teacher!" Jesus said to her, "Do not hold me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go to the others and tell them that I am ascending to my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God." Mary Magdalene went and told the disciples, "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them the things he had said to her.

During the earthquake, an angel of the Lord had descended from heaven and rolled back the stone. The appearance of the angel frightened the guards, and they went into the city to report to the Jewish authorities everything that had taken place. The Jewish council gathered together and decided to offer the soldiers a Mt. 28:2, 11-15

bribe to spread a rumor. The authorities instructed the soldiers, saying, "Tell everyone that the disciples of Jesus came at night when you were asleep and stole his body. If this rumor reaches Pilate's ears, we will talk to him and keep you out of trouble." The soldiers took the money and did as they were directed, and this story has spread among the Jews even to this day.

Lk. 24:13-27

Later in the day, two disciples of Jesus were walking along the road going to the village of Emmaus, which is about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about all the things that had happened in the past several days. As they were busy visiting, Jesus drew near to them and walked along with them. Their eyes were kept from recognizing who he was. He asked them, "What are you talking about so intensely as you walk along?" They stopped and looked at Jesus sadly. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas said, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these last days?" Jesus said, "What things?" They said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deeds and words before God and all the people. Our Jewish authorities had him delivered to the Roman authorities to be condemned to death and to be crucified. We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. This is already the third day since it all happened. The strange thing is that some women of our following have told us some amazing things. They went to the tomb early this morning and they did not find his body. They came back reporting that they had even seen a vision of angels who claimed that Jesus was alive. Others of our group went to the tomb also and found it just as the women had reported, but they did not see Jesus." Jesus said to them, "Oh foolish men, how slow you are to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Wasn't it

necessary that the Christ should suffer all these things and enter into his glory?" Then Jesus interpreted to them all the scriptures concerning himself, beginning with the writings of Moses and going through all the prophets.

When they approached the village of Emmaus, he appeared to be going further. The two disciples urged him to stay with them for the night, and Jesus went into their home. When he sat down to have supper with them, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. At that moment, their eyes were opened, and they recognized who Jesus was. Then he vanished out of their sight. They remarked to each other how their hearts had burned within them while Jesus talked with them along the way, while he explained to them the meaning of the scriptures. Even though the hour was late, they hurried back to Jerusalem where the eleven apostles were gathered together with the other believers. They reported to them what had happened to them along the road, and how Jesus was made known to them by the breaking of the bread. Lk. 24:28-35

Late in the evening, ten of the disciples were gathered together in a home. The doors were closed securely because the disciples were afraid of the Jewish authorities. Suddenly Jesus appeared in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." Then he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord, and Jesus said again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I now send you." Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone their sins, they will be forgiven, but if you refuse to forgive anyone's sins, they will not be forgiven." Jn. 20: 19-23

Thomas, one of the apostles, was not with the other apostles when Jesus came. When the other disciples told Jn. 20:24-25

him they had seen the Lord, Thomas said, "Unless I see the nail prints in his hands, and place my finger in the marks of those nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe."

**Jn. 20:26-29** Eight days later the disciples were again meeting in a home, and Thomas was with them this time. The doors were closed securely, but Jesus appeared and stood among them, saying, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here in the scars in my hands and in my side. Do not be faithless, but believing." Thomas exclaimed, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed in me because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen me and yet believe."

**Lk. 24:44-49** Jesus told all the disciples gathered there, "I explained all these things to you while I was still with you. I told you that everything written about me in the Old Testament must be fulfilled." Then Jesus explained the scriptures to them so they could understand. He said, "It is recorded in scripture that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name through all nations, beginning with Jerusalem. You are to be witnesses of these things. But remain in this city until I send the promise of my Father upon you. Then you will be clothed with power from on high."

**Jn. 21:1-8** Later Jesus revealed himself once again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee, near Tiberias. Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the sons of Zebedee and two other disciples had gone fishing. They fished all night but caught nothing. They were still out in the boat when day was breaking. It was then that Jesus appeared on the beach, but in the early dawn the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus called out to them, "Have you caught any fish?" They answered, "No." Jesus said, "If

you throw the net out on the right side of the boat, you will find some.” They threw their net out, and they caught so many fish, they could not haul the net in. Then John exclaimed, “It’s the Lord!” Peter hurried up and put on his clothes, for he had been stripped for work. Then he dived into the sea and swam to shore. But the other disciples remained in the boat, dragging the full net of fish to shore.

When they landed, they saw fish and bread being prepared on a charcoal fire. Jesus said, “Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.” Peter hauled the net ashore. It was full of fish, one hundred and fifty-three of them. Jesus said, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared to ask him, “Who are you?” They all knew it was the Lord. Jesus offered them bread and fish to eat. This was the third time that Jesus revealed himself to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Jn. 21:9-14

After breakfast Jesus said to Peter, “Peter, son of John, do you still think you love me more than the other disciples do?” Peter said, “Yes, Lord. You know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.” Jesus said to Peter a second time, “Peter, son of John, do you really love me?” Peter replied, “Yes, Lord. You know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Tend my sheep.” Jesus said to Peter a third time, “Peter, son of John, do you really love me?” Peter was grieved because Jesus had spoken to him about his loyalty the third time, and he replied, “Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Then feed my sheep. Truly I tell you, when you are young you do as you want and go where you want, but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and others will take you where you do not wish to go.”

Jn. 21:15-18

Jesus was indicating by what death Peter would glorify God. Then Jesus said, “Follow me.”

Jn. 21:19

Mt. 28:16-20     The eleven apostles went to the province of Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had directed them. When they found him there, they worshiped him, but some still doubted. Jesus said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples from every nation, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the close of the age."

Lk. 24:50-53     Then Jesus led them out as far as Bethany, and lifting up his hands, he blessed them. As he was blessing them, he departed from them. They went into Jerusalem rejoicing, and were continually in the temple blessing God.

Jn. 20:30-31     Now Jesus did many other miracles in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book, but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

# THE CONCISE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

(All marginal references are to the Acts of the Apostles)

# *Outline of the Acts of the Apostles*

## **PART I—The Beginnings of the Church (Acts 1:1–2:47)**

- a. Post-resurrection ministry and ascension of Jesus (1:1–14)
- b. Matthias is chosen to replace Judas (1:15–26)
- c. The coming of the Holy Spirit (2:1–41)
- d. Life in the early church (2:42–47)

## **PART II—The Church in Jerusalem (3:1–5:42)**

- a. An example of healing and preaching (3:1–26)
- b. First opposition from Jewish authorities (4:1–37)
- c. Strange death of Ananias and Sapphira (5:1–16)
- d. More opposition from Jewish authorities (5:17–42)

## **PART III—The Church Is Extended through Dispersion (6:1–12:25)**

- a. Seven deacons are chosen (6:1–7)
- b. Martyrdom of Stephen causes Christians to disperse (6:8–8:3)
- c. The Good News goes to Samaria (8:4–25)
- d. The conversion of the Ethiopian (8:26–40)
- e. The conversion of Saul (9:1–31)
- f. Peter's ministry and the first Gentile converts (9:32–11:18)
- g. Gentile church is established at Antioch (11:19–30)
- h. Persecution under Herod Agrippa I (12:1–25)

**PART IV – The Church Moves into Asia Minor and Europe (13:1–21:17)**

- a. First missionary journey, Galatia (13:1–14:28)
- b. The Gentile problem and the council in Jerusalem (15:1–35)
- c. Second missionary journey, Asia Minor and Europe (15:36–18:22)
- d. Third missionary journey, Asia Minor and Europe (18:23–21:16)

**PART V – The Church Is Extended to Rome (21:17–28:31)**

- a. Rejection of the Good News in Jerusalem (21:18–26:32)
- b. Reception of the Good News in Rome (27:1–28:31)



## PART I

# *The Beginnings of the Church*

JESUS appeared alive to the apostles many times 1:3-5  
during the forty days following his passion. He spoke  
to them about the kingdom of God, and told them to  
remain in Jerusalem until the Father's promise was  
fulfilled, which, Jesus said, "you heard from me, for  
John baptized with water, but soon you shall be baptized  
with the Holy Spirit."

The apostles did not understand this promise, and they 1:6-9, 12  
asked, "Lord, are you planning at this time to restore  
the kingdom to Israel?" Jesus answered, "It isn't for you  
to know the times or seasons which are fixed by the  
Father's own authority. But you shall receive power  
when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you shall be  
witnesses of me to Jerusalem, to the provinces of Judea  
and Samaria, and to the whole world." Then a cloud  
lifted Jesus up into heaven, and the apostles watched  
until he was out of their sight. This event occurred on  
the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem.

The eleven apostles returned to the city to the home 1:13-14  
where they were staying. They went to the upper room

to devote themselves to prayer along with the women and the mother and brothers of Jesus.

1:15, 21-22 By this time the whole company of believers numbered about one hundred and twenty, and Peter announced that someone should be chosen to fill the position left vacant by Judas Iscariot. Peter said, "He should be one of the men who has accompanied us during all the time Jesus was with us, beginning with the time he was baptized by John until the day he was taken up into heaven. He should join us in being a witness to the Lord's resurrection."

1:23-26 Two men were nominated, and the apostles prayed, "Lord, you know the hearts of men. Reveal which of these two you have chosen to replace the ministry and apostleship of Judas." Then they cast lots, and Matthias was selected to be numbered with the eleven apostles.

2:1-4 One hundred and twenty disciples, including the twelve and the mother of Jesus, were together in the upper room on the day of Pentecost. Suddenly there was a sound like a strong wind filling the house. There appeared little flames, like fire, resting on each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. They all began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

2:5-8, 11b-13 At that time there were devout Jews from every nation who were now making their homes in Jerusalem. Many of them gathered around the house where the believers were staying, because they were curious about the strange sounds coming from there. They were amazed because each of them heard the apostles speaking in his own language. They asked, "Aren't all of these men Galileans? Why then do each of us hear them speaking our own native language, telling us of the mighty works of God?" They were amazed and puzzled, and they asked one another, "What is the meaning of all

this?" Some suggested, "They are drunk with new wine."

Peter raised his voice and spoke to them, saying, 2:14-16  
"Citizens of the province of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, listen to what I have to say. These men are not drunk as some of you think, since it is now only nine o'clock in the morning. What you are hearing is the fulfillment of what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

" 'God declares, and it shall come to pass in the last 2:17-21  
days, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even upon the common Gentiles in those days I will pour out my Spirit. I will show many strange things in heaven and on earth before the day of the Lord comes. And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' "

"People of Israel, listen to me! God publicly demonstrated his approval of Jesus of Nazareth by performing 2:22-24  
many wonderful miracles through him, as you well know. This same Jesus was delivered up according to God's definite plan and foreknowledge. He was crucified by your decision at the hands of the Roman government. But God raised him from the dead, releasing him from the powers of death.

"Brothers, I speak confidently of the patriarch David. 2:29-33, 36, 27  
He died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this very day. He was a prophet, and knowing God had sworn to him that He would put one of his descendants upon his throne, he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ when he wrote: 'For thou wilt not abandon my soul to Hades, nor let thy Holy One see corruption.' Jesus was not abandoned in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption and decay. This Jesus God raised up, and to that we all are witnesses. He is now

exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out upon us this which you now see and hear. Let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made this same Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

2:37-39     The crowd was stricken when they heard this. They said to Peter and the other apostles, "What are we to do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to the Gentiles, and to everyone whom God calls to him."

2:40-42     Peter gave further testimony and teaching, and then said, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." Those who heeded his words were baptized, and on that day three thousand souls were added to the church. They all devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

2:43, 47b     Many miracles were done through the apostles, and the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

## PART II

# *The Church in Jerusalem*

ONE DAY Peter and John went to the temple to pray at 3:00 P.M., the hour of prayer. As they approached the temple, a man who had been lame from birth was being carried to one of the gates of the temple. He was placed there daily to ask alms of those who entered. When the crippled man saw the two apostles approaching, he asked them for money. Peter said, "Look at us!" The man looked up expecting to receive an offering. Then Peter said, "I have no money, but I will give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!" Peter took the man's hand and raised him up. Immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. The man entered the temple with Peter and John, walking and leaping and praising God. All the people recognized the man who had been lame, and now they saw him walking and praising God. They were amazed at what had happened to him. 3:1-10

While he clung to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in Solomon's Porch, an outer area of the temple, astounded. Peter spoke to them, saying, 3:11-16

“Why do you wonder at this, and stare at us as though it was our own power or piety that made this man walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has done this. The God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you delivered up to Pilate. You voted against Jesus when Pilate had already decided to release him. You rejected the Holy and Righteous One, and asked that a murderer be released instead. You killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. It is the faith which is through Jesus that has given this man the perfect health that you all now see.

3:17-23 “I know that you and the rulers acted in ignorance. But what God foretold through the Old Testament prophets about the sufferings of Christ has now been fulfilled. Therefore, repent, that your sins may be blotted out, and turn once again to the Lord that refreshing may come to you from his presence. Then God will send Jesus to you, too. He is the Christ appointed for you. He is now in heaven until everything has taken place that God has spoken through the Old Testament prophets. Moses said, ‘The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet from your own brothers even as he raised me up. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. Every soul that does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed.’

3:24-26 “All the prophets, from Samuel on, also proclaimed these days. You are the sons of the prophets and sons of the covenant which God made with your ancestors. God said to Abraham, ‘And in your posterity shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’ God raised up his servant and sent him to you first. He wanted to bless you and turn every one of you from your wickedness.”

4:1-4 The Jewish religious authorities became annoyed be-

cause Peter and John were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They arrested the two apostles and held them in custody overnight since it was already late in the day. However, many who had heard the Good News believed. By this time the believers numbered about five thousand.

The next day Peter and John were brought before the Jewish council, where all the Jewish leaders, elders, and scribes were assembled. They were asked, "By what power or by what name did you heal this man?" Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, answered, "Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined concerning a good deed done to a cripple, we want all of you, as well as all the people of Israel, to know that he was healed by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the same Jesus you crucified, but whom God raised again from the dead. Jesus is the stone which was rejected by you builders, but which has now become the cornerstone. There is salvation in no one else! For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

When the Jewish authorities saw the boldness of Peter and John, and knowing that they were common uneducated men, they were amazed. They knew Peter and John had been with Jesus, and now seeing the man who had been healed standing beside them, the authorities had nothing more to say in opposition. Peter and John and the healed man were then taken out, and the members of council conferred with one another, saying, "What shall we do with these men? Everyone in Jerusalem knows that a notable miracle has happened through them, and we cannot deny that. But let us forbid them from mentioning the name of Jesus anymore in order to keep this teaching from spreading further."

After being warned not to speak or teach anymore in

the name of Jesus, Peter and John said, "You must judge whether it is right in God's sight for us to listen to you or to God, but we can only speak of what we have seen and heard." The authorities could find no way to punish them for fear of the people, since the people were praising God for healing the forty-year-old man. So the authorities merely threatened the apostles, and then let them go.

4:23-30 The apostles went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and elders had told them. Then they united their voices in prayer, saying, "Sovereign Lord, you are the God who made heaven and earth. Our ancestor David was your child, and you spoke through him by your Holy Spirit, saying, 'Why do the nations rage, and the peoples imagine vain things? The kings and the rulers set themselves against the Lord and against his Christ.' Right here in this city, King Herod and Governor Pontius Pilate joined right along with the Gentiles and Israelites in plotting against your holy servant Jesus, unwittingly fulfilling your predetermined plan of salvation. Now Lord, look upon the threats made against us and help us to speak your word with boldness as you continue to stretch out your hand to heal and to perform miracles through the name of Jesus."

4:31 When they finished praying, the place where they were gathered was shaken, and they were all filled afresh with the Holy Spirit and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

4:32-37 Now the company of believers were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any one of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. None of them was needy, for those who owned property or houses sold them and brought the proceeds

to the apostles to distribute according to the needs of each. Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus whom the apostles surnamed Barnabas (Son of encouragement), sold his field and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Another man named Ananias along with his wife Sapphira also sold a piece of property. They decided between themselves to keep back some of the money, and laid the rest of it at the apostles' feet. Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan put it into your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit by withholding a part of your money? Before the land was sold, wasn't it all yours? And after it was sold, wasn't all the money at your disposal? Why did you now decide to deal dishonestly? You have not lied to men but to God." Hearing these words, Ananias collapsed and died. Everyone who witnessed it was very frightened. Some men carried him out and buried him. 5:1-6

Three hours later, Sapphira arrived. She hadn't heard what had happened to her husband. Peter asked her, "Did you sell the land for so much money?" When she answered affirmatively, Peter asked, "How is it that you and your husband conspired to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Right now the men are at the door who have just returned from burying your husband, and they will carry you out next." Immediately Sapphira collapsed at his feet and died, and she was buried next to her husband. Great fear came upon the whole church, and upon everyone who heard about what had taken place. 5:7-11

Many miracles were done among the people through the apostles. They all met in the temple at Solomon's Porch, and none of the rest dared join them, but the people held the apostles in high esteem. Throngs of men and women were added to the Lord. The sick were brought out into the streets so that as Peter walked by, at least his shadow might fall on some of them. People also came 5:12-16

from surrounding towns, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

5:17-21a The high priest and the Sadducees were jealous of the apostles' ministry. They arrested the apostles and put them in the public prison. That night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, saying, "Go to the temple and tell the people all about this Life." They obediently went, and they entered the temple at dawn to teach.

5:21b-26 Unaware of what had taken place, the Jewish council gathered and sent word that the apostles should be brought forth from the prison. The officers quickly returned from the prison and reported, "We found the prison securely locked and the sentries were at their posts, but the prisoners are gone." The authorities were puzzled over how this could possibly be. Then someone came and reported, "The men you put in prison are teaching in the temple." The officers went out and brought the apostles before the council without using force, for they were afraid the people might stone them.

5:27-32 The high priest sternly said, "Didn't we warn you never again to teach about this Jesus? Yet you continue to fill all Jerusalem with your teaching, and you intend to bring the blame for this man's death upon us!" Peter and the other apostles replied, "We must obey God rather than men. You killed Jesus by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him up again. God has exalted him by making him Lord and Savior, to offer to Israel repentance and forgiveness of sins. We are witnesses to these things along with the Holy Spirit whom God gives to those who obey him."

5:33-39 Hearing this, the Jewish authorities became enraged and wanted to kill the apostles. But Gamaliel, a Pharisee who was a member of the council and a highly respected teacher of the law, stood up and ordered the apostles to

be put outside for a while. Then he addressed the council, saying, "Men of Israel, be careful what you do to these men. Remember when Theudas arose with his teachings and gathered four hundred followers? He was killed, and all his followers were dispersed, and that was that. Then Judas the Galilean arose and gained some followers. But he also died, and his followers scattered. So in this case I remind you, leave these men alone. If this teaching is of men, it will fail. But if it is of God, you will not be able to stop them. You may even be found opposing God!"

The council heeded this advice and called in the apostles. After beating them and warning them not to speak in the name of Jesus anymore, they let the apostles go. The apostles left, rejoicing that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonor for the name, and they continued unceasingly to teach and preach Jesus as Christ in the temple and in the homes. 5:40-42

## PART III

# *The Church Is Extended through Dispersion*

6:1-4 THE BELIEVERS were increasing in great numbers by this time, and the Hellenists (Greek-speaking Jews) complained that their widows were being discriminated against. They claimed their widows weren't receiving as much food in the daily distribution as the others. The apostles addressed the body of believers and said, "It isn't right that we should take time out from preaching the word of God in order to serve tables. So choose seven men of good reputation who are wise and full of the Holy Spirit, and we will appoint them to this task. Then we can devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the Good News."

6:5-6 This idea pleased the people, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus. The apostles prayed for these men, laying hands upon them in blessing.

6:7 The number of disciples grew rapidly in Jerusalem,

and even a number of Jewish priests were obedient to the faith.

Many great miracles accompanied Stephen's ministry, <sup>6:8-14</sup> because he was full of grace and power. A group from the synagogue of the Freedmen came to argue with him one day, but they were no match for the wisdom and the Spirit with which Stephen spoke. Then they spread the rumor, "We have heard this man speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." This stirred up the people, and soon the Jewish officials arrested Stephen and brought him before the Jewish council. The false witnesses said, "This man is always speaking against the temple and against the laws of Moses. We have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this temple, and will eliminate the customs Moses gave to us."

All the members of the council stared at Stephen, for his face was like the face of an angel. The high priest asked Stephen if these charges were true, and he replied: <sup>6:15-7:2a</sup>

"Respected elders and friends, please hear me out. <sup>7:2b-8</sup> The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, and said to him, 'Leave your country and your countrymen and go to a land I will show you.' Obediently he left his homeland. Then God led him into this land where you are now living. However, God gave him no inheritance in it, not even one square foot. Instead, God promised to give the land to him and his posterity as a possession even though at that time Abraham had no child. God told him that his posterity would be aliens in a foreign land, where they would become slaves and be ill-treated for four hundred years. 'Then I will judge the nation which they serve,' said God, 'and afterward they shall come out and worship me in this place.' God gave Abraham the covenant of

circumcision. Eventually Abraham became the father of Isaac, and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the twelve patriarchs.

7:9-16     “The patriarchs in their jealousy of Joseph sold him into Egypt. However, God was with Joseph, and rescued him out of all his troubles. God gave him favor and wisdom before Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and the Pharaoh made Joseph the governor over Egypt and the manager over his whole household. When a famine came throughout all Egypt and Canaan causing much distress, our ancestors could find no food. Then Jacob heard there was grain to be had in Egypt, and he sent Joseph’s brothers on their first trip to buy grain from Egypt. On their second trip, Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and Joseph’s family became known to Pharaoh. Joseph invited his father Jacob and all his relatives, seventy-five in all, to come to Egypt. So Jacob and his family went down to Egypt. There Jacob died, as well as many of our other ancestors. They were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham had purchased many years earlier.

7:17-22     “As the time of the promise drew near, which God had made to Abraham, the Israelites grew to a large nation within Egypt. They lived under a succession of kings, but finally a new king came to power who knew nothing about Joseph. He dealt craftily with our race and forced our ancestors to expose their infants to the elements so they would die. It was at this time that Moses was born. He was beautiful before God. Moses was kept in his own home for three months, and when he was finally exposed, Pharaoh’s daughter found him and adopted him as her own son. In this way Moses was instructed in all the ways of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in his words and deeds.

7:23-29     “When Moses was forty, he decided to visit his own

people. Seeing an Israelite being wronged by an Egyptian, Moses defended the oppressed man by striking the Egyptian. He assumed the Israelites realized he was only trying to help them, but they didn't understand. On the following day when Moses visited them again, some of the Israelites were quarreling among themselves, and Moses attempted to reconcile them by saying, 'You are brothers; why do you wrong each other?' But the man who was wronging his neighbor pushed Moses aside, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me like you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' Hearing this, Moses was frightened, and he left the country and became an exile in Midian, where he became the father of two sons.

"When Moses had spent forty years in Midian, he was attracted one day by a bush that was aflame in the wilderness of Mount Sinai. When he approached the bush for a closer look, he heard the voice of the Lord say, 'I am the God of your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' Moses trembled and didn't dare look up. Then the Lord said, 'Remove your shoes, for you are standing on holy ground. I have seen the ill-treatment and I have heard the groanings of my people in Egypt, and I have come down to deliver them. Come now, for I am sending you to Egypt.'

7:30-34

"This same Moses, whom the Israelites had once before rejected, God now sent back to be their ruler and savior. By many wonderful miracles, Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and through the wilderness for forty years.

7:35-36

"Moses informed the people of Israel that God would one day raise up a prophet similar to him among the people. How true this was, for in the wilderness Moses was a mediator between the people and the angel of God who gave them the Living Word on Mount Sinai.

7:37-38

7:39-41     “However, our ancestors rejected Moses and desired to return to Egypt. They no longer trusted the leadership of Moses, and they asked Aaron to make idols for them to lead them back to Egypt. So they made a golden calf for an idol and they brought sacrifices to it and celebrated around it.

7:42-43     “Then God abandoned the Israelites for a time and allowed them to worship the stars. In the Book of Amos God asks, ‘Were you offering sacrifices to me during your forty years in the wilderness, Israel? Certainly not! Your real interest was in the star gods and your homemade idols. For this behavior you will go into captivity beyond Babylon.’

7:44-45     “Our ancestors brought with them the tabernacle (the portable tent of witness). God had instructed Moses exactly how it was to be built. Later Joshua brought this tabernacle along as he led the Israelites in battle for possession of the new land. There it was used until King David’s time.

7:46-50     “King David wanted to build a temple to God because of God’s favorable dealings with him, but it was finally Solomon who actually built it. However, God doesn’t dwell in temples made with hands, for the Lord speaks through his prophet saying, ‘Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool. What kind of home could you build that would be adequate for me? Do you believe I could live in it? Have I not created everything?’

7:51-53     “You stubborn people! You remain uncircumcised in heart and ears, always resisting the Holy Spirit. You are just like your ancestors! They persecuted the prophets, and they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you now have betrayed and murdered. You, of all people! You, who have received the Old Testament writings that were

delivered by the angels, and you did not pay attention to what they said.”

When the high priest and the Jewish council heard these things, they became enraged. But Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit. He looked heavenward, and said, “I see the heavens opened, and I see Jesus standing at the right hand of God.” 7:54-56

The Jewish council wouldn't hear any more. They put their hands over their ears and shouted Stephen down. Then together they rushed upon him and dragged him outside the city and stoned him. And those who did the actual stoning laid their outer garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. As they stoned him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then he knelt down and cried out loudly, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he died, Christian friends buried Stephen, mourning his death. 7:57-60a; 8:2

Saul had consented to the death of Stephen, and he continued to harass the church. He entered into private homes where services were being held, and he hauled men and women to prison. There was great persecution against the church at this time. The apostles remained at Jerusalem, but the other believers scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Everywhere they went, they preached the good news. 8:1, 3-4

Philip went to a city in Samaria and preached about Christ. People listened intently and watched the miracles which were performed. Many evil spirits were cast out, screaming as they left their victims. Many who were lame or paralyzed were healed. So there was much joy in that city. 8:5-8

There was a magician living in that city, named Simon, who had been practicing sorcery and amazing the nation of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. 8:9-13

And from the least to the greatest of them, they all gave heed to him, saying, "This man is the power of God which is called Great." So by his magic he had seduced them a long time, and they were taken up by him. But when the people heard and believed what Philip preached concerning the kingdom of God and that Jesus was the Messiah, they were baptized. Even Simon himself believed and was baptized. For a time he followed Philip, for he was amazed at the miracles which were being done.

8:14-17     When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the good news, they sent Peter and John to investigate. They discovered that the Samaritan believers had been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, but as yet the Holy Spirit had not fallen upon them. The apostles then laid hands on the believers and prayed for them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

8:18-24     When Simon saw that the Holy Spirit had been given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money to learn how he could do the same thing. Peter said, "You and your money can go to hell for thinking that the gift of God can be purchased with money! You cannot be a part of this; your heart isn't right before God. You are in deep bitterness and bound by deceit. Repent of this evil and pray God to forgive the intent of your heart." Simon said, "Pray to God for me, so that nothing terrible will happen to me."

8:25     Peter and John testified and preached the good news in many villages of Samaria, and then they returned to Jerusalem.

8:26-31     But an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, "Go south along the desert road that leads from Jerusalem to Gaza." As Philip obeyed, he saw a man from Ethiopia riding in a chariot and reading the book of Isaiah the prophet. This man was a eunuch, the treasurer to Queen

Candace of Ethiopia. He had come to Jerusalem to worship, and he was now returning home. Then the Holy Spirit said to Philip, "Go and walk alongside the chariot." Philip obeyed. When he heard the man reading from Isaiah, he asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" The Ethiopian replied, "How can I understand unless someone instructs me?" Then he invited Philip to ride with him in the chariot.

The passage of scripture the man was reading was, 8:32-33  
"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, and like a lamb is silent before the shearers, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation, justice was denied him. Who can defend his generation for their actions? For his life is taken up from the earth."

The Ethiopian asked, "Please tell me who the prophet is speaking about here. Does he refer to himself or to someone else?" Philip began with that scripture passage to tell him about Jesus. Later, as they passed a stream of running water in a gully, the Ethiopian asked Philip to baptize him. Stopping the chariot, they both went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. 8:34-36, 38

As soon as they came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit whisked Philip away. The Ethiopian saw him no more, but he went on his way rejoicing. Meanwhile Philip found himself in Azotus, several miles away. He traveled toward Caesarea, preaching in the cities along the way. 8:39-40

Saul was still threatening and persecuting the Christian believers. He went to the high priest and asked for letters of extradition to carry to the synagogue in Damascus, giving him authority to arrest any Christian believers he might find, and bring them back to Jerusalem. On his way to Damascus, however, he found himself suddenly engulfed in a brilliant light from heaven. He fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, 9:1-6

why do you persecute me?" Saul replied, "Who are you, sir?" The Lord said, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. Rise and go into Damascus. There you will be told what you must do."

9:7-9 The men who were traveling with Saul stood speechless, because they had heard a voice but could see no one speaking. When Saul got up, he could not see. He had to be led by hand into Damascus. For three days he remained blind and did not eat or drink.

9:10-11, 13-16 In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord had said to him in a vision, "Ananias, go to the house of Judas on Straight Street, and ask for a man named Saul of Tarsus. He is there praying." Ananias said, "Lord, I have heard a great deal about this man. He has done great evil to all the saints at Jerusalem, and now he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all the believers that call on your name." But the Lord answered, "Go, for this man is a chosen vessel to me. He will bear my name to Gentiles and kings as well as to the children of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake."

9:12 Paul had seen a vision too, and in it he had seen a man named Ananias coming to him and putting his hand on him in order to restore his sight.

9:17-19a When Ananias found Saul, he put his hands on him, saying, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you along the road has sent me to you in order that you might receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." Immediately something like scales fell from Saul's eyes and he received his sight. He arose and was baptized. Then he ate and was strengthened.

9:19b-21 After several days with the disciples at Damascus, he preached Jesus in the synagogues, saying that he is the Son of God. Those who heard him were amazed,

and they asked, "Isn't this the same man that persecuted the believers in Jerusalem, and who came here with the same intention?"

But Saul continued to preach. He confounded the Jews that lived in Damascus by his wise reasoning, proving that Jesus is the Christ. After a time, the Jews decided to kill Saul. They watched the gates of the city day and night hoping to ambush and kill him, but Saul was aware of their intentions. One night the disciples lowered Saul over the city wall in a basket, and Saul escaped to Jerusalem. He attempted to join the other disciples there, but they were all afraid of him. They did not know that he had become a disciple. 9:22-26

Barnabas brought Saul before the apostles and told them how Saul had seen the Lord along the road, and that the Lord had spoken to him. He related how Saul had been preaching boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. Only then was Saul allowed to join the fellowship of believers at Jerusalem. 9:27-28

Saul spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and he argued with the Greeks. But they, too, set about to kill him. When the other Christians learned of it, they brought Saul down to Caesarea, and sent him to Tarsus. 9:29-30

Then began a period of peace for the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria. The people had an opportunity to grow spiritually as well as in numbers. They walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit. 9:31

Peter was still engaged in a traveling ministry throughout Judea, and in the course of his travels he visited the saints at Lydda. There he found a man named Aeneas who had been sick in bed for eight years with palsy. Peter said, "Aeneas, Jesus Christ makes you whole! 9:32-35

Get up and make your bed." The man got up immediately. All the citizenry of Lydda and Sharon turned to the Lord when they saw the man walking.

9:36-43      Ten miles away, at Joppa, there was a disciple named Tabitha, who was loved by many people for her good works and acts of charity. One day she became sick and died, and her body was laid in an upper room awaiting burial. The disciples at Joppa had heard that Peter was at Lydda, and they sent two messengers to bring him to them. When Peter arrived, he was taken straight to the upper room. All the widows were weeping. They gathered around Peter to show him the coats and garments Tabitha had made for them. Peter put all of them out of the room, and he knelt down to pray. Then, turning to the body, he said, "Tabitha, get up!" Tabitha opened her eyes. When she saw Peter, she sat up. Peter took her hand and helped her up. Then he called the saints and widows in, and he presented Tabitha to them alive. This miracle was told throughout all Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. Peter stayed in Joppa for many days, living in the home of Simon, a tanner.

10:1-6      In Caesarea by the sea, which is about thirty miles north of Joppa, lived a man named Cornelius, a commander of a Roman company. He was a devout man who gave liberal donations to the people, and prayed to God regularly. One day, about three o'clock in the afternoon, he saw in a vision plainly an angel of God coming toward him, and calling him by name. He was afraid, but he answered, "What is it, Lord?" The angel said, "Your prayers and your donations have arisen as a memorial before God. Now send messengers to Joppa to bring a man named Peter. He is staying with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the seaside."

10:7-8      When the angel departed, Cornelius sent two of his

trusted household servants to Joppa along with a devout soldier. He told them what they were to do.

About noon the next day, as the three of them were approaching Joppa, Peter went up on the flat housetop to pray. He was very hungry at that time, but lunch was not yet ready, and Peter fell into a trance. He saw heaven opened, and a large sheet was lowered to earth by the four corners. In the sheet were all kinds of animals, reptiles, and birds. Then he heard a voice say to him, "Go ahead, Peter; kill and eat whatever animal you choose." But Peter said, "I won't do it, Lord! I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." The voice spoke to him again, saying, "What God has cleansed, you should not called common." Three times the large sheet was lowered and raised again into the sky. 10:9-16

Peter wasn't sure at first what this vision meant. As he was thinking about it, the men arrived from Cornelius. They were standing at the gate inquiring for Simon's house. While Peter thought about the vision, the Holy Spirit said to him, "Behold, there are three men looking for you. Go down to them and don't be concerned, for I have sent them to you." 10:17-20

Peter went down to greet the men from Cornelius, and said, "I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?" They answered, "We come from Cornelius, the company commander. He is a just man who fears God and has a good reputation among the Jews. He was told by a holy angel to send for you to hear what you have to say." 10:21-22

Peter invited them in and put them up for the night. On the next day Peter went with them, and other believers from Joppa also accompanied them. As they came to Caesarea the following day, Cornelius was waiting for them. He had called together all his relatives and close 10:23-29

friends. As Peter approached, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet, worshiping him. But Peter pulled him to his feet, saying, "Get up! I am only a man." Peter addressed the group that had gathered to hear him, saying, "You know that it is an unlawful thing for a Jew to keep company, or to enter into a home, of someone of another race. But God has shown me in a vision that I should never call any person common or unclean. Therefore I came to you without hesitation as soon as I was sent for. Now may I ask, why did you send for me?"

10:30-33      Cornelius said, "Four days ago I was praying, and an angel stood before me in bright clothing, and instructed me to send to Joppa for you. You have been kind enough to come, and we are assembled to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord."

10:34-41      Then Peter said, "Truly I perceive that God is no respecter of persons. He accepts anyone from any nation who fears him and obeys him. You know the good news which has been spread throughout all Judea. It began in Galilee when God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good, healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him. We are witnesses of all the things which he did among the Jews. Nonetheless, the Jews killed Jesus by hanging him on a tree. But God raised him up on the third day. He was seen alive, not by all the people, but by the witnesses chosen by God. Some of us were privileged to eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

10:42-43      "He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God to be the judge of the living and dead. All the prophets give witness to him, that whoever believes in him shall receive forgiveness of their sins."

10:44-48      Even as Peter was speaking, the Holy Spirit fell on

everyone who heard the word. The Jewish Christians who accompanied Peter heard the people praising God with new languages. They were astonished when they realized God had poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles also. Then Peter asked, "Can anyone forbid water that these people may be baptized? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we did." Then Peter commanded that they be baptized in the name of the Lord. Afterward they begged Peter to stay with them several days.

The apostles and the believers that were in Judea 11:1-17 heard that the Gentiles had also received the good news. Later when Peter went to Jerusalem, the Jewish Christians contended with him, saying, "You had fellowship with people who were uncircumcised! Did you eat with them?" Peter related to the church in Jerusalem the whole incident, beginning with the vision he had seen in Joppa, and how he had been called to Caesarea to speak to the Gentiles. Then he said, "As I began to speak to them, the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as it fell on us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how he told us, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' Since God gave them the same gift he gave to us, who was I to argue with God?"

The people of Jerusalem held their peace when they 11:18 heard these things. They praised God, saying, "Then God has also granted repentance unto life to the Gentiles."

Meanwhile some of the Christians that left Jerusalem 11:19-22 after the persecution of Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch. They preached the good news to no one but the Jews, but some of the Christians from Cyprus and Cyrene went to Antioch to preach the Lord Jesus to the Greeks. The hand of the

Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord. When news of this reached the church in Jerusalem, Barnabas was sent to Antioch.

11:23-24 When Barnabas arrived in Antioch, he rejoiced when he saw the grace of God there. He urged the people to remain faithful to the Lord. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith. Many people were added to the Lord through his ministry.

11:25-26 Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to bring Saul back to Antioch, where they taught in the church for a whole year. It was at Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians.

11:27-30 One day a group of prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. One of them, Agabus, indicated by the Holy Spirit that there was to be a great famine throughout all the world. Later this came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. The disciples, every one according to his ability, determined to send relief to the Christians who were living in Judea. Barnabas and Saul then delivered their gifts to the elders of the churches in Judea.

12:1-5 It was about this time that Herod Agrippa I, king of Judea and Galilee, began to persecute certain elements of the church. He had James, the brother of John, executed with a sword. When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he had Peter arrested too. It was during the Passover celebration when an execution would not be fitting, so Peter was held in prison. The king assigned four squads of four soldiers each to watch over Peter, intending after the Passover to bring him out before the people. Earnest prayer was made for Peter while he was in prison.

12:6-8 The last night Peter was to spend in prison, before Herod would have executed him, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers. He was bound to them with chains, and sentries were posted by the prison doors.

Peter and the two soldiers were sleeping when a bright light appeared in the prison. An angel of the Lord struck Peter to awaken him, saying, "Get up quickly!" As Peter stood up, the chains fell off his hands. Then the angel instructed him to follow him.

Peter followed him out, not knowing for sure whether he was seeing a vision or not. They passed undetected by the first and second sentries, and then they came to the iron gate that leads to the city. This opened of its own accord. When they arrived safely out on the street, the angel left Peter. 12:9-10

Peter looked around and said, "Now I know for sure that the Lord has sent his angel to deliver me out of Herod's hand, and from the execution the Jews are expecting." Then Peter hurried to the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark. Many people were gathered together praying there. Peter rapped at the door, and a maid by the name of Rhoda answered it. She recognized Peter's voice, but in her excitement and joy she ran in to tell the people and left Peter standing outside the door. They told her she was out of her mind, but she insisted that it was Peter. They argued, saying, "It is his angel." But Peter continued rapping, and when they finally opened the door, they saw him and were astonished. 12:11-16

He motioned to them to keep quiet, and then he related how the Lord had brought him out of prison. He told them, "Go and tell these things to James and the other brethren." Then Peter went to another place. 12:17

At daybreak there was great commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter. When Herod came looking for Peter, and did not find him in prison, he questioned the guards and ordered them to be put to death. 12:18-19a

About this time, for some reason, Herod became 12:20-23

highly displeased with the people of Tyre and Sidon. They, however, desired peace with Herod, because their country needed produce and goods from Herod's kingdom. They sent emissaries to the king, desiring to make peace. On the appointed day, Herod, arrayed in royal robes, sat upon his throne and made a speech to the delegation. The people gave a shout of approval, saying, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." Immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died a few days later.

## PART IV

# *The Church Moves into Asia Minor and Europe*

IN THE CHURCH at Antioch were several prophets and teachers, among whom were Barnabas and Saul, who had returned there from Jerusalem. They brought John Mark with them. One day as the prophets and teachers were worshiping and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Dedicate Barnabas and Saul for a special work I have for them." The others prayed for them with the laying on of hands, and sent them on their way. 13:1-3  
12:25

The Holy Spirit directed Barnabas and Saul to go to Seleucia. From there they sailed to Cyprus. At Salamis, on the coast of Cyprus, they preached the good news in the synagogues. John Mark also accompanied them and assisted by instructing the new believers. 13:4-5

Later they went to the other end of the island of Cyprus, to the city of Paphos, where they found a false prophet. He was a Jewish sorcerer named Bar-Jesus. He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, who had sent for Barnabas and Saul so he could hear the good news. The sorcerer knew that if the proconsul accepted the message of Barnabas and Saul, his own position would 13:6-12

be endangered, so he tried to influence the proconsul away from the faith. Then Saul, filled with the Holy Spirit, stared at the sorcerer and said, "You child of the devil! You are sneaky and full of tricks. You are an enemy of all righteousness! Stop perverting the way of the Lord. Right now God has his hand of judgment on you, and you will be afflicted for a time with blindness." Immediately the sorcerer's sight failed him, and he had to be led around by his hand. When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed. He was astonished at the power of God's word.

NOTE: (From here on Saul is called Paul. Saul is his Jewish name, which means "One who is asked for" – by parents who long for a son. Paul is his Gentile name, which means "Little.")

13:13 When Paul and his company left Paphos, they went to Perga in Pamphylia. John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem.

13:14-15 From Perga they went to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day to worship. After the reading of the Old Testament, the rulers of the synagogue told them, "If you men have any word of teaching for us, please speak up."

13:16 Paul stood up and said, "You men of Israel, and anyone else who is God-fearing, listen to me.

13:17-23 "The God of Israel chose our ancestors and honored them by delivering them by his almighty intervention when they were aliens in Egypt. During Israel's forty years in the wilderness, God nourished them like a father. Later he destroyed seven nations in the land of Canaan, and divided their land to the Israelites by lot. For four hundred fifty years God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. Then Israel desired a king, and God gave to them Saul from the tribe of Benjamin. He was king for forty years. Then God removed

him and raised up David to be their king. God spoke of David, saying, 'I have found David, the son of Jesse, whose heart is attuned to the doing of my will.' It was out of King David's family-line that Jesus was born, thus fulfilling God's promise to raise up a Savior for Israel.

"When John the Baptist neared the end of his ministry of baptizing repentant people, he said, 'I am not the promised one that you have been looking for. Behold, there is one who comes after me, whose shoes I am not worthy to untie.'  
13:24-25

"Men and brothers, descendants of Abraham as well as you Gentiles who fear God, the good news of this salvation is meant for all of you. The Jews and their leaders that live in Jerusalem put Jesus to death, because they didn't recognize that he was the one the prophets were speaking of, even though they listened to the reading of the scriptures every sabbath day. Unwittingly they have fulfilled the scriptures in condemning Jesus. Even though Pilate found no cause of death in him, yet he allowed Jesus to be put to death. When all the prophecies had been fulfilled, and Jesus had been crucified, they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb. God then raised Jesus from the dead, and he was seen on many occasions by his disciples who had followed him throughout his ministry. They are his witnesses today to other people.  
13:26-31

"We declare this good news to you now. God has fulfilled for us the promise he made to our ancestors by bringing Jesus back to life again. This is what the second Psalm means when it says, 'You are My Son which I have begotten this day.' Another psalm says, 'God will not permit his Holy One to die and decay.' This does not refer to David, because after David served the will of God in his own generation, he died, and his body decayed. But Jesus, whom God raised again, experienced  
13:32-41

no decay. Let it be known to you therefore, that through Jesus you have the forgiveness of sins. Everyone who believes in him is freed from all things that could not be freed by the law of Moses. Beware that the curse which is spoken of by the prophets does not come upon you. They warn, 'Behold, you despisers and scoffers! I am doing a work in your days which you will not even believe when you are told about it.'

13:42-43 When the service was finished, many people asked Paul to come back and preach again the following sabbath. After the congregation had dispersed for the day, many Jews and devout Gentiles remained with Paul and Barnabas and believed their message. Paul and Barnabas urged them to continue in the grace of God.

13:44-45 The following sabbath, almost the whole city gathered to hear Paul preach the good news. When the Jewish leaders saw the great crowd, they were filled with envy, and they contradicted Paul's teachings and cursed him.

13:46-47 Then Paul and Barnabas boldly said, "It was necessary that the good news should first be spoken to you. But since you have rejected it and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, we must then turn to the Gentiles. This is how the Lord commanded us when he said, 'I have sent you to be a light to the Gentiles, so that salvation can be brought to everyone on earth.' "

13:48-49 The Gentiles rejoiced when they heard this, and they praised the good news. As many as were ordained to eternal life believed. Thus the good news was spread throughout all the region.

13:50-52 Then the Jewish leaders spread rumors among the devout women and the leading men of the city. They stirred up opposition against Paul and Barnabas and drove them out of their area. Paul and Barnabas shook off the dust from their feet as a testimony against them,

and went to Iconium. The believers there were joyous and filled with the Holy Spirit.

At Iconium, Paul and Barnabas went into the synagogue and taught, and a great multitude of Jews and Greeks were converted. The unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, filling their minds with rumors and suspicion against the Christians. Paul and Barnabas remained there a long time. They preached boldly, and the Lord gave his approval to their message by giving them power to perform miracles. But the people of the city remained divided. Some listened to the Jews, and some listened to the apostles. The opposition connived with their leaders to mistreat and stone the apostles, but Paul and Barnabas became aware of their plot. They escaped to Lycaonia, and preached the good news in Lystra and Derbe and the surrounding region. 14:1-7

In Lystra there was a man who had been crippled from birth. He had never walked. He listened to Paul preach, and Paul perceived that the man had faith to be healed. Paul spoke to the man in a commanding voice, "Stand up on your feet!" The man leaped up and walked around. This news spread throughout all the province of Lycaonia when people saw what Paul had done. They said, "The gods have come down to us in the bodies of men." They decided Barnabas must be the Greek god Zeus, and Paul must be Hermes since he was the chief speaker. Then the local priests of the temple of Zeus brought garlands to adorn the apostles and prepared oxen to sacrifice to them. When Barnabas and Paul realized what the priests were doing, they tore their clothes, symbolizing their horror for the blasphemy. They ran among the people, crying out, "Why do you do these things? We are human like you. You must turn from your worship of these foolish things and turn to the living God. He is the one who made heaven and earth 14:8-17

and all things. In former times he allowed all nations to go their own way. Yet he has not left us without a clue to his nature in the kindness he demonstrates in giving the rain from heaven and the fruitful seasons which satisfy us with food and gladness."

14:18-20 Even with this explanation, Paul and Barnabas barely restrained the people from offering sacrifice to them. A few days later, some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and turned the people against Paul and Barnabas. They dragged Paul out of the city and stoned him. They left him there, believing him to be dead. However the believers gathered around him in prayer, and Paul got up and returned to the city. The next day he left with Barnabas and went to Derbe.

14:21-23 They preached the good news at Derbe, and made many disciples. Then they returned again to Lystra and Iconium, and Antioch, to encourage the new disciples to continue in the Christian faith. They reminded them that through tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. They appointed elders in each of the congregations, and after spending some time in prayer and fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had put their faith.

14:24-28 Passing through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. From there they went on to preach the good news in Perga, and then on down into Attalia. From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had originally been commended to the grace of God for the task which they had now completed. Arriving in Antioch, they called the congregation together, and reported all that God had done through them, and told how he had opened the doors of salvation to the Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas stayed for some time with the Christians in Antioch.

15:1-2 While Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch, some Jewish Christians who belonged to the party of the Pharisees

came from Judea, and they told the Gentile Christians that they could not be saved unless they were circumcised and lived by the Jewish customs set down in the Old Testament. Paul and Barnabas disagreed with their position. After lengthy and fruitless arguments and discussions, the believers decided that Paul and Barnabas should lead a delegation to Jerusalem and discuss the problem with the apostles and elders there.

The delegation journeyed to Jerusalem, visiting churches in Phoenicia and Samaria along the way. They reported that even the Gentiles were being converted to Christianity. This was cause for great joy among the believers. 15:3

When the delegation arrived in Jerusalem, they met with the church officials and reported everything God was doing through their ministry. Then the subject of circumcising the Gentile Christians was brought up. 15:4-5

The apostles and elders gathered together in private to consider the problem. After much deliberation, Peter said, "You all know that God chose me long ago to bring the good news to the Gentiles so they, too, could believe. God made no distinction between the Jews and the Gentiles, as he attested by giving them the Holy Spirit even as he did to us. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for God purifies the lives of both. Why now should we correct God by insisting that the Gentiles be burdened with a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors were able to bear? Aren't we all agreed that everyone is saved by the free gift of the Lord Jesus Christ?" 15:6-11

There was no further discussion. Paul and Barnabas told the group about the marvelous miracles God had been doing among the Gentiles through their ministry. 15:12

Then James spoke up, saying, "Peter reminded us of his first visit to the Gentiles, and the fact that the Gentiles were converted agrees with what the prophets pre-

15:13-21

dicted. As Amos records, 'I will return (the Lord is speaking here) and rebuild the congregation of David which has fallen apart, so the Gentiles also will find the Lord. This is according to God's plan from the beginning.' " James continued his logic by saying, "In my judgment, then, we should not insist that the Gentile Christians obey Jewish laws, except those that deal with fornication and eating meat from strangled animals or animals offered to idols. These things have been preached against in the synagogues every sabbath for generations."

15:22 The apostles and elders, as well as the whole Jerusalem congregation, agreed on the matter, and they chose two delegates to return to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas carrying a letter to report on their decision. The letter read this way:

15:23 "The brethren, both the apostles and the elders, in Jerusalem send greetings to our fellow believers among the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia:

15:24-27 "We know that some believers from here have troubled you by questioning your salvation, although we gave them no instructions. We have now assembled and discussed this matter thoroughly, and having agreed on the matter unanimously, we decided to send two official representatives along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul. The men chosen were Judas (Barsabbas) and Silas, who have risked their lives in their ministry for the Lord Jesus Christ. They will confirm in person what we have written.

15:28-29 "It seems good to the Holy Spirit and to us to put no greater burden on you than those things we believe are essential, such as abstaining from food offered to idols and from unbled meat of strangled animals, and from fornication. If you observe these things, you will do well. Farewell."

15:30-34 There was great joy among the congregation at Anti-

och when the letter was read to them. Judas and Silas, being prophets, encouraged and instructed the people in the faith. Silas wanted to remain at Antioch for a while, but after some time, both Silas and Judas returned to Jerusalem.

Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch for a time to assist the congregational leaders with the teaching and preaching. Then Paul suggested to Barnabas that they should return and visit all the congregations they had established earlier, and see how they were getting along. Barnabas agreed, and wanted to take John Mark along, too. But Paul was against this since John Mark had deserted them in Pamphylia earlier. The contention between Paul and Barnabas over this issue was so heated that they parted company. Barnabas took John Mark and sailed to Cyprus, and Paul took Silas and went to Syria and Cilicia, encouraging the congregations there. 15:35-41

Paul and Silas visited Derbe first, and then went on to Lystra where they met Timothy, a young believer whose mother was a Jewish believer and his father a Greek. Timothy had a good reputation among the Christians in Lystra and Iconium, so Paul invited him to join him and Silas on their journey. In deference to the Jews living in that region, Paul circumcised Timothy before they started out, since all the Jews knew Timothy's father was Greek. Then they continued their journey, going from city to city, announcing the decision concerning the Gentiles that had been pronounced by the church officials in Jerusalem. The churches grew in faith and numbers every day. 16:1-5

The team traveled on through Phrygia and Galatia, since the Holy Spirit had told them not to go into the province of Asia yet to preach the good news. 16:6

Skirting along the border of Mysia, they decided to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus restrained them, and 16:7-8

they continued on to Troas, where I, Luke, joined them.

16:9-10 One night Paul had a vision in which he saw a man of Macedonia pleading with him, "Come to Macedonia and help us." After seeing the vision, we determined that we would certainly go to Macedonia, since we could only conclude that God was calling us to preach the good news to them.

16:11-12 We boarded a boat to Troas and sailed over to Samothrace, and then on to Neapolis, and finally to Philippi, a Roman colony just inside the border of Macedonia. Here we remained for several days.

16:13-15 On the sabbath we went outside the city to a riverbank where we had heard that a prayer meeting was being held. There we spoke to some women who came. One of them was named Lydia, a merchant of expensive clothing in Thyatira. She was already a worshiper of God, and as she listened to Paul, the Lord opened her heart, and she accepted everything he was teaching. Then she and her family were baptized, and she invited us to stay at her house as guests.

16:16-18 One day as we were going to the prayer meeting by the river, we met a slave girl who had a demon of divination. She made it possible for her owners to earn large sums of money with her fortune-telling. This girl followed us around for several days, shouting, "These men are servants of the Almighty God who show us the way of salvation." Finally Paul could take it no longer, and he turned and spoke to the demon, saying, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" The demon left the girl that very hour.

16:19-21 When her owners saw that their source of gaining wealth was gone, they dragged Paul and Silas before the magistrates in the market place. They shouted their charges, saying, "These Jews are corrupting our cities by teaching the people to do things that are contrary to Roman laws."

A mob quickly formed, and the magistrates ordered Paul and Silas to be stripped and beaten. After the rods had produced many welts and bloody bruises on their bodies, Paul and Silas were thrown into prison. The jailer was threatened with death if these prisoners should escape, so he put Paul and Silas in the inner dungeon and fastened their ankles in chains. 16:22-24

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Then, suddenly, a severe earthquake shook the prison so violently that the doors flew open and the chains fell off all the prisoners. The jailer awakened, and when he saw the prison doors wide open, he assumed the prisoners had escaped. He drew his sword intending to kill himself, but Paul shouted to him, saying, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here." 16:25-28

The jailer ran trembling to the inner dungeon and brought Paul and Silas out. He pleadingly asked, "What must I do to be saved?" 16:29-30

They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. The same goes for your whole family too." And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to everyone in his house. That very hour the jailer washed the apostles' wounds, and he was baptized at once, with all his family. Back in his home, they enjoyed a meal together and he rejoiced with all his household that he had believed in God. 16:31-34

The next morning, the magistrates sent word to the jailer to release Paul and Silas, so he told them they were now free to go. But Paul wasn't about to forget the matter that easily. He said, "We are Roman citizens, and without being given a trial, we were publicly beaten and thrown into prison. Now they want us to leave quietly. Nothing doing! Let them come in person and release us!" 16:35-37

The magistrates trembled with fear when they were in- 16:38-40

formed that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. They hurried to the jail and brought Paul and Silas out, pleading with them to leave the city. Paul and Silas then returned to Lydia's home, and after meeting once more with the little congregation and encouraging the believers, they left town.

17:1-4 Paul and Silas traveled through the cities of Amphipolis and Apollonia on their way to Thessalonica. There was a Jewish synagogue there, and according to his custom, Paul went there to preach on three succeeding sabbaths. He proved that Jesus is the Messiah by explaining the scriptures and pointing out the prophecies that told of the Messiah's suffering and his rising again from the dead. Among the many listeners who were convinced and became believers were several influential women of the city and many Greek men also.

17:5-7 But the Jewish people who chose not to believe were envious, and they incited some ruffians to form a mob and start a riot. They assaulted the home of Jason, where Paul and Silas were staying, but when they discovered that Paul and Silas were not there, the mob dragged Jason and some other Christians before the judges, saying, "Paul and Silas have turned the rest of the world upside-down, and now they are trying to do the same in our city too. They have been staying in Jason's house. They are all guilty of treason, for they claim Jesus is their king instead of Caesar."

17:8-9 The people of the city and the officials were deeply troubled over the charges, but the judges released the Christians after Jason posted bail for them all.

17:10-12 That night the brethren sent Paul and Silas on their way to Beroea, and according to custom, Paul and Silas went to the synagogue to preach. They found the people here more receptive to the good news. They listened gladly, and they searched the scriptures daily to see if

Paul and Silas were correct in their teaching. As a result, many of them believed, including not a few Greek women as well as men.

When the Jews in Thessalonica heard that Paul was preaching in Berea, they came to stir up trouble for him. Several Christian friends quickly took Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy remained in Berea. The friends brought Paul to Athens, and then returned to Berea with an urgent message from Paul that Silas and Timothy were to hurry and join him. 17:13-15

While Paul waited for them in Athens, he was deeply concerned about all the idolatry he saw everywhere in the city. He had discussions with the Jews and devout Gentiles in the synagogue, and he spoke daily in the public square to anyone who happened to be there. 17:16-17

He also held discussions with some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. When he spoke to them about Jesus and his resurrection, some called him a babbler, while others thought he was presenting some strange new religion. However, they invited him to the forum on Mars Hill, saying, "Tell us more about this new teaching of which you speak. What you say sounds strange to our ears, and we would like to learn more about it." (All the Athenians spent their time in telling about or listening to new things.) 17:18-21

Standing in the midst of the forum on Mars Hill, Paul said, "Men of Athens, as I walked about your city, I noticed that you are very religious, for I have seen your many altars. I found one altar that was inscribed, 'To the unknown God.' You have been worshiping this God without knowing who he is, and I want to tell you about him. 17:22-23

"He is the God who made the world and everything in it. He is the Lord of everything! He does not dwell in temples made with hands. Neither can human hands 17:24-31

minister to his needs, for he has no needs. He gives life and breath to all things, and satisfies every need. Out of one man, he has created all the people of the world. It is his intention that everyone should seek after him, that they might search for him and find him. He is not far from any one of us, for in him we live and move and have our being. One of your own poets has said, 'We are all children of God.' Forasmuch then as we are the children of God, we ought never to think of God as something that is fashioned by men out of gold, silver, or stone. For a time God tolerated man's ignorance about these things, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent, because he has appointed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has ordained, assuring all men of this by raising him from the dead."

17:32-34      When Paul spoke of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said they wanted to hear more. When he ended his discussion, a few people joined him and became believers. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the city council, and a woman named Damaris, and others.

18:1-3      Paul left Athens after that and went to Corinth. There he met a Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife, Priscilla. They had left Italy as a result of Claudius Caesar's order to deport all Jews from Rome. Since they were tentmakers, the same trade Paul had, Paul lived and worked with them for a time.

18:4-6      Every sabbath he went to the synagogue, attempting to persuade the Jews and Greeks with his reasoning. After Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul spent all of his time preaching and testifying to the Jews that Jesus is the Messiah. But when the Jews opposed Paul and hurled curses and insults at Jesus, Paul shook

the dust off his robe as a testimony against them, and said, "Your lives are in your own hands! Whatever happens to you, I am innocent! From now on I will preach to the Gentiles."

Paul moved in with a Gentile Christian named Titus Justus, who lived next door to the synagogue. However, there were many Jews in Corinth who became believers. Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, and all his family believed in the Lord and were baptized, and there were many others also. 18:7-8

One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision, saying, "Don't be afraid! Speak boldly! Don't quit! For I am with you, and no one can harm you. Many people in this city belong to me." So Paul remained in Corinth another year and a half, teaching God's truth to them. 18:9-11

When Gallio became governor of Achaia, the Jews joined forces against Paul and brought him before the governor for judgment. They accused him of persuading people to worship God contrary to the laws of Rome. Before Paul could make his defense, Gallio addressed the Jews, saying, "Listen, you Jews, if this were a case involving a crime, I would listen to what you have to say. But since this is merely a matter of words and names and of your Jewish laws, you take care of this matter yourselves. I will not judge such things." Then he drove them out from his courtroom. 18:12-16

Then they all grabbed Sosthenes, the new leader of the synagogue, and gave him a beating outside the courtroom. But Gallio paid no attention. 18:17

Paul remained in the city for a while longer and then said farewell to the believers there and sailed off to Syria, taking Priscilla and Aquila with him. At Cenchreae, he cut his hair as part of a vow he had made. When we arrived at the port of Ephesus, we all remained aboard while Paul went to the synagogue for a discussion with 18:18-23

the Jews. They asked him to remain with them for a few days, but Paul refused, saying that he wanted to go to Jerusalem to observe the religious feast. He promised to return again, if God was willing, and we sailed on to Caesarea. Paul brought a greeting to the church at Jerusalem, and then went on to Antioch. After spending some time there, he left and went from place to place in the region of Galatia and Phrygia, visiting all the congregations along the way and encouraging all the believers.

18:24-28

About this time, Apollos, a Jew from Alexandria in Egypt, arrived in Ephesus. He was an excellent teacher and an eloquent preacher, with a good understanding of the scriptures. He only knew about John the Baptist and what he had said concerning the Messiah. Yet he taught fervently and faithfully that which he knew. Aquila and Priscilla heard him teaching boldly about these things in the synagogue, and they instructed him further concerning the good news. Later when Apollos went to Greece, the believers there welcomed him. He was of great help in strengthening the church there. He boldly refuted all the Jewish arguments in public debate, proving by the scriptures that Jesus is the Messiah.

19:1-7

While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul arrived at Ephesus. He found twelve disciples there, and he asked them, "Have you received the Holy Spirit since you became believers?" They replied, "We didn't even know there was a Holy Spirit." And Paul said, "Then into what were you baptized?" They answered, "Into John's baptism." Then he said, "John baptized with the baptism unto repentance, saying that people should believe on the one who was to come after him, Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came

upon them, and they spoke with new languages, and prophesied.

For the next three months, Paul went to the synagogue in Ephesus to argue and plead about the kingdom of God. When several of the Jews rejected Paul's message and publicly ridiculed the Christian way, he departed from the synagogue, taking the believers with him. From there he went daily to the lecture hall of Tyrannus to dispute and teach. He remained in this province for a period of two years, until everyone, Jews and Greeks alike, heard about the Lord Jesus. 19:8-10

During that time God performed many unusual miracles through Paul. Whenever his handkerchiefs or part of his clothing were placed upon sick people, the people were healed and evil spirits went out of them. A team of itinerant Jews, who practiced casting out demons, decided to experiment with exorcism by the name of the Lord Jesus. They would address the demons, saying, "We adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preaches, to come out!" Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. When they tried to cast an evil spirit out of a man in this fashion, the evil spirit replied, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?" Then the man in whom the evil spirit dwelt overpowered them, and the men ran out of the house badly injured and with their clothing torn. 19:11-16

News of this incident spread quickly throughout Ephesus, to Jews and Greeks alike. Everyone was filled with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus became highly respected. Many of the believers who had been practicing black magic confessed their evil deeds and brought their books and charms and publicly burned them. They figured the value of it all at about ten thousand dollars. So by the power of the Lord, the word was growing and gaining strength. 19:17-20

19:21-22 By this time Paul felt impelled by the Holy Spirit to travel through Greece before returning to Jerusalem. "After that," he said, "I must go to Rome!" He sent his two assistants, Timothy and Erastus, ahead of him into Greece, while he remained a while longer in Ephesus.

19:23-28 It was about this time that trouble developed in Ephesus concerning the Christians. Demetrius was the one who started the problem. He was a silversmith who made silver shrines for the goddess Artemis (Latin: Diana). This trade brought a large income to the craftsmen in Ephesus. Demetrius called all the craftsmen together, and said, "Our income has been seriously diminished because Paul has persuaded many of the people to turn away from the idols we have been fashioning with our hands. It is bad enough that our craft and income are being destroyed, but it is even worse that the temple of our great goddess, Artemis, should be despised, and her beauty destroyed, not only at Ephesus but throughout all Asia." Hearing this, the craftsmen were filled with wrath, and they shouted, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians."

19:29-31 The whole city was filled with confusion, and a mob grabbed Gaius and Aristarchus, two of Paul's traveling companions, and dragged them to the amphitheater for trial. Paul wanted to go in, too, and speak to the people, but the disciples would not allow it. Some of the provincial officials who were friends of Paul also sent a message to him, begging him not to go into the theater.

19:32 Inside the amphitheater, there was mass confusion. Some said one thing and others said another, and most of them didn't even know why they were there.

19:33-34 Some of the Jews found Alexander in the crowd, and they put him forward to speak to the people. He motioned to them with his hand for silence, and attempted

to speak to the crowd, but when the mob discovered he was a Jew, they all began to shout once again, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians." And they kept it up for two hours.

Finally the town clerk appeased the people by saying, 19:35-41  
"Men of Ephesus, everyone knows that our city is the worship center of the great goddess Artemis, and that her image fell down to us from heaven. Since no one can refute this, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rash. Yet you have brought these men here who are not guilty either of robbing her temple or of defaming her name. Now if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against them, the courts are open, and the judges will hear their case. If there are complaints about any other matters, they can be handled at the regular meeting of the city council. Now let's break this up, for we are in danger of being called to account by the Roman authorities for today's riot." With that, the clerk dismissed the assembly.

When the crowd had dispersed, Paul called the believers together. He embraced each of them, and then left for Greece. Along the way he paused to instruct the Christians in various places. Paul remained in Greece three months, and then planned to sail for Syria. He learned of a plot that the Jews had made against him, so he traveled north through Macedonia instead. 20:1-3

Several men traveled with Paul, going with him as far as Asia Minor. They were Sopater of Beroea; Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica; and Gaius from Derbe. Also, Timothy, Tychicus, and Trophimus who were returning to their homes in Asia Minor had gone on ahead of us and were waiting for us at Troas. When the Passover ceremonies were ended, we boarded ship at Philippi in northern Greece and five days later arrived in Troas where we remained a week. 20:4-6

20:7-12      On Sunday, we gathered together in an upper room for a communion service, with Paul preaching. Since he was planning to leave the following day, he continued speaking until midnight. A young man, named Eutychus, was sitting in a window. Torches, used for lighting, made the room quite stuffy, and Eutychus fell asleep during Paul's long sermon, and he fell from the third story and died. Paul ran downstairs and embraced the young man, saying to the people, "Don't worry! He'll be all right." The young man was brought back upstairs alive, and everyone rejoiced. After sharing communion together, Paul conversed with them a long while, until daybreak.

20:13-21      When we continued our journey, Paul decided to travel to Assos by foot while the rest of us went there by ship. Paul had agreed to meet us there, and when we took him aboard we sailed to Mitylene. From there we sailed to Miletus. Paul had decided not to stop at Ephesus this trip, for he wanted to hurry on to Jerusalem in hopes of being there for Pentecost, so from Miletus, Paul sent word to Ephesus for the elders of the church to come to Miletus and meet with him. When they arrived, he spoke to them, saying, "You men know that from the very first day until now I have served the Lord in all humility, with many tears and troubles caused by the constant plotting of the Jews. Yet I never held anything back that was helpful to you, whether in public or from house to house. I preached the same requirements to the Jews and the Gentiles, repentance to God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

20:22-24      "Now I am going to Jerusalem, feeling irresistibly drawn by the Holy Spirit, not knowing what things might await me there, except that the Holy Spirit has told me in every city that imprisonment and suffering await me. But these things don't bother me, for I do not count my life important, except that I want to complete

my ministry for the Lord Jesus and to testify of the good news of God's grace.

"I know that none of you, among whom I have gone preaching the good news, shall see me again. I want to take this opportunity to set the record straight. I am innocent of the blood of all of you because I have never shunned my responsibility to declare unto everyone the full counsel of God. Pay attention then to your responsibilities to all the congregations, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the churches of the Lord which he has purchased with his own blood. I know that when I leave, false teachers will enter among you who will not spare the flock. Even among yourselves there will be false teachings that will lead people astray. Therefore be watchful, and remember that during the three years that I was with you, I never stopped warning you and praying for you night and day about this, even with tears. Now, brothers, I commend you to God and to his grace, which is able to build you up and give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 20:25-32

"I have never coveted anyone's money or fine clothes. And you know that anything I or my companions have needed has been supplied by the labor of my own hands. Among the other things, I have taught you to help those who are less fortunate than yourselves, reminding you of the words of Jesus, who said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' " 20:33-35

Then Paul knelt down and prayed for all of them. They wept and embraced Paul and kissed him, sorrowing most of all because he had said they would not see him again. Then they accompanied him to the ship. 20:36-38

After leaving there, we set a straight course for Cos, and the following day to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. There we boarded another ship that was sailing 21:1-3

for the Syrian province of Phoenicia. We sailed past the island of Cyprus, and landed at the harbor of Tyre, in Syria, where the ship was unloaded.

21:4-6 We spent a week there during which time we fellow-shipped with the disciples, who told Paul through the Holy Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem. When we were ready to depart, the believers and their families accompanied us back to the ship. Before boarding, we knelt down on the shore and prayed with them.

21:7-9 Our ship set course for Ptolemais, where we spent one day with the believers. Then we left for Caesarea where we stayed for several days with Philip the evangelist, one of the original seven deacons. He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.

21:10-11 While we were there, Agabus, a prophet, came from Judea. During his visit he took Paul's belt and tied his hands and feet with it, saying, "This is what the Holy Spirit says, 'In like manner the Jews in Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt, and shall turn him over to the Romans.'"

21:12-14 Hearing these things, we begged Paul not to go to Jerusalem. But Paul answered, "Why all the fuss? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem if necessary for the name of the Lord Jesus." When nothing could dissuade him, we stopped trying, saying, "The will of the Lord be done."

## PART V

# *The Church Is Extended to Rome*

AFTER THESE DAYS, we made ready and went up to Jerusalem. Several of the believers from Caesarea accompanied us, and at Jerusalem the brethren received us joyfully. 21:15-17

The following day, Paul accompanied several of us as we visited James and the elders. Paul told them the wonderful things God had been doing among the Gentiles through his ministry. They praised God when they heard these things, but nonetheless they were very concerned. 21:18-19

They said to Paul, "Brother, we have many thousands of Jewish believers here who are zealous for the laws and rites of the books of Moses. They have heard that you teach all the Jewish believers who live in Gentile countries to ignore the traditions of Moses, telling them that they don't have to circumcise their children, or observe the other Jewish customs. What then is to be done? They will soon learn that you are here. 21:20-22

"We have a suggestion. We have four Jewish men who have taken a Nazarite vow. Go to the temple and iden- 21:23-24

tify yourself with them, paying the expenses for shaving the heads of all five of you. This will prove to the Jewish Christians that you approve of the Jewish customs.

21:25 “So far as the Gentile Christians are concerned, we have written our decision that they do not need to observe the Jewish customs, except to refrain from eating meat offered to idols and meat from strangled animals, and to refrain from immorality.”

21:26–29 The following day, Paul took the four men to the temple, and began the seven-day ritual of purification. Paul provided the sacrifices for all of them. The week of purification was almost over when some unbelieving Jews from Asia Minor recognized Paul and created a scene. They grabbed him, shouting, “Men of Israel, help us! Here is the man who has been teaching people everywhere to turn against the Jews and away from the law of Moses and the temple. Furthermore, he brought Greeks into the temple and polluted this holy place.” (For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him and supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple.)

21:30–39 They stirred up the people until a mob gathered. They took Paul out of the temple, and the temple doors were closed. They intended to kill Paul, but news that a riot was starting soon came to the captain of the Roman contingent. He immediately brought two hundred soldiers and their officers to break up the mob. When the Jews saw the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. The Roman commander arrested Paul and bound him with two chains. Then he asked Paul who he was and what he had done. Some Jews cried out one charge, while others shouted another. When the commander could not understand the charge from the mob, he instructed that Paul be brought to the fort. The mob followed along, crying, “Away with him!” but the soldiers protected Paul from the violence

of the people. Entering the fort, Paul asked the commander for permission to speak to him. The commander said, "You can speak Greek! Are you that Egyptian who made so much trouble not so long ago by leading those four thousand murderers into the desert?" Paul replied, "No, I am a Jew from Tarsus in Cilicia, and I request permission to speak to these people."

When he was granted permission, Paul stood on the steps, and motioned to the people for silence. Then he spoke to them in the Hebrew language, saying, "Brothers and fathers, listen to me as I make my defense to you." When they heard Paul speaking in Hebrew, they became silent. "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia. I was taught here in Jerusalem under Gamaliel to follow the Jewish laws and customs perfectly. I was eager to please God in everything that I did, even as you people want to do. 21:40-22:3

"I persecuted Christians constantly. I arrested both men and women and put them in prison. The high priest and members of the council can testify that I am speaking the truth, for they issued me letters to take to Damascus permitting me to arrest any Christians I found there and bring them bound to Jerusalem for punishment. 22:4-5

"I started that journey and had almost arrived at Damascus about noon one day, when suddenly a bright light from heaven engulfed me. I fell to the ground when I heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' I answered, 'Who are you, sir?' and he answered, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.' 22:6-8

"Those who were with me were frightened when they saw the light, but they did not hear the voice that spoke to me. Then I said, 'Lord, what shall I do?' And the Lord replied, 'Get up and go into Damascus. There you shall be told of the things you must do.' 22:9-10

22:11-16      “I was led by the hand into Damascus because I was still blinded by the bright light. There, a devout man named Ananias came to me and said, ‘Brother Saul, receive your sight!’ And immediately I received my sight. Then he told me, ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you, that you should see and hear the Just One, and know his will, for you shall be his witness to everyone of what you have seen and heard. Now, call on the name of the Lord, and be baptized, and have your sins washed away.’

22:17-21      “Later, when I returned to Jerusalem, I saw a vision as I prayed in the temple, and in the vision the Lord said to me, ‘Hurry and leave Jerusalem, for they will not receive your testimony concerning me here.’ I replied, ‘Lord, you know that when the blood of the martyr Stephen was shed, I was there and consented to his death. And everyone in Jerusalem knows that I imprisoned and punished all the believers I found in the synagogue.’ Then the Lord replied, ‘Go! I am sending you to the Gentiles.’ ”

22:22-23      The Jews had listened to what Paul had to say up to this point, but that word ‘Gentiles’ enraged them. They tore their clothing and threw dust in the air, shouting, “Away with such a fellow from the earth! He is not fit to live.”

22:24-26      The Roman commander had Paul brought into the fort, and intended to get a confession from Paul by torturing him. But as they were binding Paul with leather thongs, Paul said to the officer in charge, “Is it lawful for you to scourge an uncondemned Roman citizen?” When the officer heard that, he sent a message to the commander, saying, “Be careful what you do to this man. He is a Roman citizen.”

22:27-30      Then the commander came and asked Paul, “Are you a Roman citizen?” When Paul answered affirmatively,

the commander told Paul, "I purchased my freedom for a great sum of money." But Paul replied, "I was free-born." The soldiers drew away from Paul when they learned that he was a Roman citizen, and the captain was afraid because he had ordered him bound. The next day the commander summoned the Jewish council, and arraigned Paul before them to determine if there were adequate grounds for legal procedure against him.

Paul addressed the council in all earnestness, saying, 23:1  
"Honored men, I have always lived with a good conscience before God."

Hearing this, the high priest Ananias commanded that 23:2-3  
Paul should be struck on the mouth. Then Paul continued, "God shall strike you, you whitewashed hypocrite! You sit there intending to judge me according to the law, and now you command that I be struck, which is contrary to the law."

Those standing nearby rebuked Paul for addressing 23:4-5  
God's high priest in such a way. He replied, "I didn't realize he was the high priest, for the scriptures say, 'You shall not speak evil of the ruler of your people.'"

When Paul perceived that part of the council were 23:6  
Sadducees and part were Pharisees, he continued his address, "Honored men, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee, and it is because of my belief in the resurrection of the dead that I am called into question today."

This immediately caused dissension between the 23:7-10  
Pharisees and Sadducees, for the Sadducees do not believe in a resurrection, or angels, or that we have a spirit within us. But the Pharisees believe these things. The Pharisees immediately spoke up, saying, "We find nothing wrong in this man. What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?" And when the dissension became violent, the commander, afraid that Paul would be torn in pieces by them, ordered his men to go down and take

him by force from among them and bring him into the barracks.

23:11 That night the Lord appeared to Paul, saying, "Take courage, Paul, for you must bear witness at Rome even as you testified of me here in Jerusalem."

23:12-15 The next day a group of forty Jews banded together, vowing not to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. They informed the Jewish council of their intention. They connived to have the council request that the commander bring Paul in for another hearing to clear up some point, and they, in turn, would lie in wait to kill him.

23:16-22 The son of Paul's sister heard of their plotting, and he informed Paul of it. Paul then sent the young man to tell the commander about it. The commander heard him out and told the young man to tell no one that he had been informed of the plot.

23:23-27 The commander then ordered two captains to prepare to take Paul to Governor Felix at Caesarea, under heavy guard at nine o'clock that night. Meanwhile the commander wrote a letter: "From Claudius Lysias to the most excellent governor Felix: I am sending you this man who was captured and threatened with death by the Jews. When I learned that he was a Roman citizen, I rescued him with the soldiers.

23:28-30 "I had the man brought before the Jewish council to determine the charges against him. They were accusing him of things concerning their law, but certainly nothing worthy of death or imprisonment. When I learned that some Jews were plotting to kill this man, I immediately sent him to you, and I have ordered his accusers to state their charges to you in person. Farewell."

23:33-35 When they arrived in Caesarea, the governor read the letter as Paul stood before him. Then the governor informed Paul that he would hear his case when his ac-

users arrived. In the meantime, Paul was kept in a cell in Herod's palace, where the governor made his residence.

Five days later, Ananias the high priest, accompanied by the elders and an attorney named Tertullus, came to the governor with their charges against Paul. Tertullus addressed the governor, saying, "Most honorable Felix, we are truly thankful that your presence in our nation has brought such peace in all places. I do not wish to bore you, so I will be brief. We have found this man to be a troublemaker. He is a ringleader of a sect known as the Nazarenes, who are always inciting the Jews throughout the world to rebel against the Roman authorities, and he was trying to profane the temple when we arrested him. By examining him yourself, you will be able to learn from him about everything of which we accuse him." 24:1-8

All the Jews also joined in the charge, agreeing with what Tertullus had said. Then the governor gave Paul permission to speak. Paul said, "I am happy to answer to these charges in your presence, for I know you have judged this nation for many years, and I know you will understand what I have to say." 24:9-11

"Twelve days ago I arrived in Jerusalem to worship. During that time, I had no arguments in the temple with anyone, nor did I stir up the people either in the synagogue or about the city. They cannot prove any of the charges they now bring against me. But this I admit to you, that according to the Way, which they call heresy, I worship the God of my fathers, believing everything that is written in the Old Testament. I share their hope in God that there will be a resurrection of the dead, for both the just and the unjust. That is why I always take pains to have a clear conscience toward God and toward men." 24:11-16

"After many years of being away from Jerusalem, I 24:17-23

returned bringing money to help my fellow Jews and to bring offerings to God. One day I was in the temple with a small group. We were purifying ourselves. There was no rioting. And some Jews from Asia Minor accosted me. They ought to be here now and state whether or not they have any charges against me. Or at least those who are here should state if they have found any wrongdoing in me while I stood before their council other than what I stated concerning my beliefs in the resurrection of the dead.” But Felix, understanding quite well the Christian teachings, put them off, saying, “When Lysias the commander comes down, I will decide your case.” He then ordered a guard to keep Paul in custody with some liberty and to permit his friends to minister to his needs.

24:24-25     Several days later Paul was invited by Felix and his Jewish wife Drusilla to speak to them about faith in Christ Jesus. As Paul told them of righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was alarmed and said, “You may go now, and I will send for you again when I have a more convenient time.”

24:26-27     Felix had hoped that Paul would bribe him for his freedom, so he sent for him frequently to visit with him. But when two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus. Felix, wanting to please the Jews, left Paul in chains.

25:1-5     Three days after Festus took office in Caesarea, he took a trip to Jerusalem. There the Jewish authorities told him their story about Paul, and asked for Paul to be returned to Jerusalem for trial. They secretly planned to ambush him on the way and kill him. But Festus said that as long as Paul was in Caesarea and that since he was soon returning there himself, that those who had any charges against Paul should return with him to Caesarea for the trial.

After spending eight or ten days in Jerusalem, Felix returned to Caesarea, and the following day he held court. He commanded that Paul be brought before him. The Jews that had come down from Jerusalem made many serious charges against Paul which they could not prove. Paul defended himself against the charges, saying, "I have done no offense against the law of the Jews, or against the temple, or against Caesar."

25:6-8

In an effort to please the Jews, Festus asked Paul, "Will you be willing to go up to Jerusalem and be judged in these matters before me there?" Paul answered, "I am standing in Caesar's court right now where I ought to be judged. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you very well know. If I have committed an offense, or have done anything worthy of death, I am willing to die. But if I am not guilty of any of these things with which they charge me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar." After conferring with his counsel, Festus said, "You have appealed to Caesar, and to Caesar you shall go."

25:9-12

Several days later King Agrippa and his sister Bernice came to Caesarea to extend greetings to the new governor, Festus. During their long visit, Festus told them all about Paul's case. He told them of the complaint the Jewish authorities had spoken to him in Jerusalem, and how, after inviting them to state their charges in Caesarea, they brought no charge of such evils as he had supposed. He said, "They spoke against him concerning some of their own superstition, and about a man called Jesus, who had died, but whom Paul claimed to be alive. Being at a loss how to investigate these questions, I asked Paul if he was willing to return to Jerusalem to be judged in these matters that were brought against him. It was then that Paul made his appeal to the emperor, so I ordered him to be kept in jail until I could send him

25:13-22

to Caesar.” And Agrippa said, “I should like to hear the man myself.” “Tomorrow,” replied Festus, “you shall.”

25:23 The following day the honored guests made their entrance into the courtroom with great pomp, along with the army officers and the prominent men of the city. Then Festus summoned Paul.

25:24-27 Festus addressed the assembly, saying, “King Agrippa, and everyone present, standing before you is a man about whom many Jewish authorities have spoken to me, both in Jerusalem and here, charging that he ought to be put to death. But when I found this man guilty of none of the charges of which he was accused, he himself made an appeal to Caesar. I have decided to send him, even though I have no definite charges to write concerning him. It is for this reason that I have brought him before this assembly, and especially in the presence of you, King Agrippa, that after another examination I might have something to write to Caesar. It is only reasonable that if a prisoner is sent, the charges against him ought to accompany him.”

26:1-3 Then Agrippa said to Paul, “You are permitted to speak on your own behalf.” Paul said, “I am pleased to make my defense before you, King Agrippa, because you know all the customs and teachings of the Jews, and therefore I ask you then to bear with me.

26:4-7 “From my early youth, I have lived as a Pharisee, the strictest sect of our Jewish faith. And now I stand accused of believing in a promise of God which he made to our Israelite ancestors, a promise for which our twelve tribes served God day and night, hoping to attain it. It is for this very belief, King Agrippa, that I am accused by the Jews.

26:8-11 “Why should it be so incredible that God should raise the dead? I once thought it my duty to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. I imprisoned many of the

saints in Jerusalem by the authority of the chief priests; and when some were put to death, I was consenting to it. I often went into the synagogues and compelled Christians to blaspheme. My hatred for them was so violent that I even went into other cities to persecute them.

“Thus I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests to persecute the Christians. At midday along the road, I saw a bright light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who traveled with me. Then I heard a voice speaking to me, and saying in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is painful for you to ignore the pricks of your conscience.’ And I said, ‘Who are you, sir?’ And he answered, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. Stand up, for I have appeared to you for a reason. I am going to make you a minister and a witness of the things you have seen, and of those things which I will teach you. I am sending you to open the eyes of the Gentiles so they will turn from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, that they, too, may receive forgiveness of sins and the inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’ 26:12-18

“Then, Honored Agrippa, I obeyed the heavenly vision. I brought the message of repentance and faith in God first to the Jews in Damascus and then at Jerusalem. Then I went to all the coastlands of Judea, and finally to the Gentiles. It was during the pursuit of my obedience to the heavenly vision that the Jews caught me in the temple, and wanted to put me to death. But, with the help of God, I continue even to this day, witnessing to prominent and common people alike, teaching only those things which the Old Testament said would come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and would show God’s light to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles.” 26:19-23

26:24 As Paul defended himself in this manner, Festus spoke up in a loud voice, "Paul, you sound like you are out of your mind. Much learning has made you insane."

26:25-27 But Paul said, "I am not insane, most noble Festus. I am speaking only the plain and simple truth. The king himself can bear witness to the things I speak, for I believe he is aware of all these things since I have not done them secretly. King Agrippa, do you believe what the prophets have written? I know that you believe."

26:28-29 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time you think to make me a Christian!" Paul replied, "Whether short or long, it is my prayer to God that not only you but everyone else that hears me this day would become just as I am, except for these chains."

26:30-32 After Paul had made his defense, the king, the governor, and the rest of the court left and conferred among themselves, saying, "This man has done nothing worthy of death or of chains." Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been released if he had not appealed to Caesar."

27:1-6 Paul and some other prisoners were sent to Italy under the charge of an officer whose name was Julius, and some of us decided that we would accompany Paul on his journey. We boarded a ship that followed the coast of Asia Minor, stopping at various ports. Julius gave Paul the freedom of the ship so that he could be with his friends. At the port of Myra, in Lycia, Julius found an Alexandrian ship sailing directly to Italy, and he put us aboard.

27:7-20 We moved slowly for many days because of the lack of wind, and sailing under the lee of Crete, we came to a place called Fair Havens, not far from the city of Lasea. Much time had been lost by now so that the winter storms were imminent, and Paul admonished them, "I perceive that this voyage will be with injury and much

loss, not only to the cargo, but also to our lives.” But Julius put more trust in the captain and owner of the ship than in the things which Paul said. It was decided that Fair Havens was not a good place to spend the winter, and the majority was in favor of reaching the harbor of Phoenix, which was a better place. For a while everyone was pleased because the south wind blew softly, but soon a stormy wind, called a northeaster, caught hold of the ship. We reinforced the ship in every way possible. The following day we threw much of the cargo overboard. On the third day, we all helped to throw over the extra tackle. But after many days of not seeing the sun or stars because of the raging storm, we gave up all hope of being saved.

As they had been long without food, Paul addressed the crew and passengers saying, “You should have listened to me, and stayed in Crete. Then you wouldn’t have experienced this danger and loss. But there is still cause for cheer. We will lose the ship, but no life will be lost. For this very night an angel of God said to me, ‘Do not be afraid Paul; you must be brought before Caesar. And lo, God will preserve you and everyone that sails with you.’ So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it shall happen just as it has been told to me. But we shall have to be cast ashore on some island.” 27:21-26

About midnight on the fourteenth night of the storm, the sailors believed we were drawing near to land. They took soundings and discovered the water was becoming shallower. Fearing that the ship would run upon the rocks, they threw out four anchors from the stern. Some of the sailors were planning to escape in the ship’s boat, pretending that they were going to set anchors off the bow. Paul realized what they were doing and told the guard, “Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved.” The soldiers cut the ropes that were lowering 27:27-32

the boat, and it fell into the water, foiling the attempted escape.

27:33-36 At dawn Paul told everyone to eat, since they had been in suspense and without food for two weeks since the storm began. "You will need to eat for your strength," said Paul, "but not a hair of your heads will be harmed." In the presence of everyone, Paul gave thanks to God for his food, and began to eat. Everyone's spirits were raised, and they all began to eat.

27:37-41 There were two hundred seventy-six of us on the ship. When we had all eaten, we lightened the ship as much as we possibly could, throwing even the wheat overboard. And when it was day, no one could recognize the land, but they noticed a bay with a beach, on which they planned if possible to bring the ship ashore. So they cast off the anchors and left them in the sea, at the same time loosening the ropes that tied the rudders; then, hoisting the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. But striking a shoal, they ran the vessel aground; the bow stuck and remained immovable, and the stern was broken up by the surf.

27:42-44 At first the soldiers suggested that the prisoners should be killed to keep them from escaping. But the captain of the guard, wanting to spare Paul, overrode their suggestion. He commanded those who could to dive into the sea and swim to shore, and the rest should float in on boards and pieces of the ship. In this way, everyone got safely to shore.

28:1-6 We discovered that we were on the island of Malta. The people there showed us great kindness. They built a fire for us, for we were shivering from the rain and cold. Paul helped to gather wood, and once when he was putting a bundle of sticks onto the fire, a poisonous snake that was escaping the heat, sank its fangs into Paul's hand. When the islanders saw the snake fastened on

Paul's hand, they spoke among themselves, "No doubt this man is a murderer. He may have escaped death from the sea, but justice won't allow him to live." But Paul shook off the snake into the fire and felt no harm. The people kept staring at Paul for a long time. When he didn't die, nor did his hand even begin to swell, and no harm came to him whatsoever, the people changed their minds and said that Paul must be a god.

Publius, the chief man of the island, politely put us up for three days. During that time, the father of Publius lay sick with fever and dysentery. Paul visited him and prayed, and putting his hands on him healed him. Soon afterward everyone on the island who had diseases came to Paul and were healed. The people showed us great respect, and when we departed, they gave us everything we needed. 28:7-10

Three months after we had been shipwrecked, we boarded a ship out of Alexandria. We stopped at Syracuse for three days, and from there to Rhegium. The following day we arrived at the port of Puteoli in Italy, where we found a congregation of believers. We stayed with them for a week, and then sailed on toward Rome. During our seven days with the believers, word had been sent ahead to the fellow believers who then came to meet us at the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns. When Paul saw them, he took new courage and gave thanks to God. 28:11-15

Arriving in Rome, the other prisoners were turned over to the captain of the guard, but Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier that guarded him. 28:16

Three days later, Paul called the Jewish leaders together, and said to them, "Honored friends, although I have committed no offense against the customs and teachings of our fathers, yet I was turned over by the Jewish authorities in Jerusalem as a prisoner of the 28:17-20

Romans. They examined me and would have let me go, because I have committed nothing worthy of death. But when the Jews spoke against my release, I made an appeal to Caesar. It is for this reason that I have called you together, since it is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain."

28:21-23 They replied, "We haven't heard a word about this matter, and no one has said anything bad about you to us. We are willing to listen to you, even though everywhere we go this Christian sect is spoken against." They set a date when Paul could speak to them. Many came together at that time, and Paul taught and testified to them concerning the kingdom of God from morning to evening, proving to them from the Old Testament that Jesus is the promised Messiah.

28:24-29 Some chose to believe, but the majority did not. Seeing this, Paul remarked, "Well did the Holy Spirit speak through Isaiah the prophet, saying, 'Tell the Jews, "You will hear and see but you will not understand, as your hearts are grown dull. Your ears won't listen, and your eyes won't see. You don't want to see and hear and understand and turn to me to heal you." ' Let it be known to you then that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen."

28:30-31 Paul remained for two whole years unmolested in his own rented house, receiving everyone who came to visit him, and preaching the reign of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and unhindered.